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THE HISTORY
OF
BRITISH COMMERCE,

From the Earliest Times.

REPRINTED FROM
THE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND;
WITH CORRECTIONS, ADDITIONS,
AND A CONTINUATION TO THE PRESENT DAY.

By GEO. L. CRAIK, M.A.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
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HISTORY

OF

BRITISH COMMERCE.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE AND DURING THE ROMAN OCCUPATION.

THE small beginnings, hidden in the depths of ancient time, of that which has become so mighty a thing as British commerce, have an interest for the imagination, the same in kind with that belonging to the discovery of the remote spring or rill which forms the apparently insignificant source of some famous river, but as much higher in degree as the history of human affairs is a higher study than the history of inanimate nature.

The Phoenicians, the great trading people of antiquity, are the first foreigners who are recorded to have opened any commercial intercourse with the British islands. There are some facts which make it probable that this extremity of the globe was visited even by the navigators of the parent Asiatic states of Sidon and Tyre. Tin, a product then to be obtained only from Britain and Spain, was certainly used in considerable quantities by the civilized nations of the earliest times. It was the alloy with which, before they attained the knowledge of the art of giving a high temper to iron, they hardened copper, and made it serve for warlike instruments and many other purposes. A mixture of copper and tin, in due proportions, was perhaps fitted, indeed, to take a sharper edge as a sword or spear than could have been given to iron itself, for a long time after the latter metal came to be known and wrought. It is certain at least that swords and other weapons fabricated of the compound metal continued to be used long after the introduction of iron.

This composition was really what the Greeks called *chalcos* and the Romans *aes*, although these words have usually been improperly translated brass, which is compounded not of copper and tin, but of copper and zinc. There is no reason to suppose that zinc was at all known to the ancients; and, if so, brass, properly so called, was equally unknown to them. What is commonly called the brass of the Greeks and Romans, being, as we have said, a mixture of copper and tin, is not brass, but bronze. This is the material, not only of the ancient statues, but also of many of their other metallic articles both ornamental and useful. It was of this, for instance, that they fabricated the best of their mirrors and reflecting specula; for the composition, in certain proportions, is capable of taking a high polish, as well as of being hammered or filed to a sharp and hard edge in others. This also is the material of which so many of the Celtic antiquities are formed, and which on this account is sometimes called Celtic brass, although it might with as much propriety be called Greek brass, or Roman brass. In like manner the swords found at Cannæ, which are supposed to be Carthaginian, are of bronze, or a composition of copper and tin. Tin, too, is supposed, with much probability, to have been used by the Phœnicians at a very early period in those processes of dyeing cloth for which Tyre in particular was so famous. Solutions of tin in various acids are still applied as mordants for fixing colours in cloth. Tin is understood to be mentioned under the Hebrew term *bedil*, in the Book of Numbers;* and, as all the other metals supposed to have been then known are enumerated in the same passage, it would be difficult to give another probable translation of the word. The lexicographers derive it from *bedl*, to separate; tin, they say, being a separating metal. This would carry the knowledge and use of tin back to a date nearly 1500 years antecedent to the commencement of our era. At a much later date, the prophet Ezekiel is supposed to mention it under the same name as one of the commodities in which Tyre traded with Tarshish, probably a general appellation for the coun-

* xxxi. 22.

tries lying beyond the Pillars of Hercules. The age of Ezekiel is placed nearly six centuries before the birth of Christ; but we have evidence of the knowledge and employment of tin by the Phoenicians at a much earlier period in the account of the erection and decoration of the Temple of Solomon, the principal workmen employed in which—and among the rest the makers of the articles of brass, that is, bronze, and other metals—were brought from Tyre.

The oldest notice, or that at least professing to be derived from the oldest sources, which we have of the Phoenician trade with Britain, is that contained in the narrative of the voyage of the Carthaginian navigator Himileo, which is given us by Festus Avienus.* This voyage is supposed to have been performed about 1000 years before the commencement of our era. Himileo is stated to have reached the Isles of the *Œstrymnides* within less than four months after he had set sail from Carthage. Little doubt can be entertained, from the description given of their position and of other circumstances, that these were the Scilly Islands. The *Œstrymnides* are placed by Avienus in the neighbourhood of Albion and of Ireland, being two days' sail from the latter. They were rich, he says, in tin and lead (*metallo divites stanni atque plumbi*). The people are described as being numerous, high-spirited, active, and eagerly devoted to trade; yet they had no ships built of timber wherewith to make their voyages, but in a wonderful manner effected their way along the water in boats constructed merely of skins sewed together. We must suppose that the skins or hides were distended by wickerwork which they covered, although that is not mentioned. There are well authenticated accounts of voyages of considerable length made in such vessels as those here described at a much later period.

It is observable that in this relation neither the *Œstrymnides*, nor the Sacred Isle of the *Hiberni*, nor that of the *Albiones* in its neighbourhood, appear to be spoken

* Avienus wrote his work, entitled “*Ora Maritima*,” in Latin iambic verse in the fourth century; but he states that he drew his information from the ancient Punic records.

of as discoveries made by Himilco; on the contrary, the Isle of the Hiberni is described as known by the epithet of the Sacred Isle to the ancients, and the resort for the purposes of traffic to the Cœstrymnides is declared to have been a custom of the inhabitants of Tartessus and Carthage.

No mines of any kind are now wrought in the Scilly islands; but they present appearances of ancient excavations, and the names of two of them, as Camden has remarked, seem to intimate that mining had been at one time carried on in them. They may in early times have produced lead as well as tin; or, these metals here obtained by the Phœnicians, or their colonists of Tartessus and Carthage, may have been brought from the neighbouring peninsula of Cornwall, which produces both, and which besides was most probably itself considered one of these islands. Pliny, it may be noted, has preserved the tradition, that the first person who imported lead (*plumbum*—by which name, however, he designates both lead and tin) from the island of Cassiteris was Midacritus,* which has been supposed to be a corruption of Melicartus, the name of the Phœnician Hercules. Cassiteris means merely the land of tin, that metal being called in Greek *cassiteron*.

The next notice which we have of the trade of the Phœnicians, or their colonists, with Britain, is that preserved by Strabo. His account is, that the traffic with the isles called the Cassiterides, which he describes as being ten in number, lying close to one another, in the main ocean north from the Artabri (the people of Gallicia), was at first exclusively in the hands of the Phœnicians of Gades, who carefully concealed it from all the rest of the world. Only one of the ten islands, he states, was uninhabited; the people occupying the others wore black cloaks, which were girt about the waist and reached to their ankles: they walked about with sticks in their hands, and their beards were as long as those of goats. They led a pastoral and wandering life. He expressly

* Nat. Hist. VII. 57.

mentions their mines both of tin and lead, and these metals, he adds, along with skins, they give to the foreign merchants who resort to them in exchange for earthenware, salt, and articles of bronze.

We may here observe that the geographer Dionysius Periegetes gives the name of the Isles of the Hesperides to the native country of tin, and says that these isles, which he seems to place in the neighbourhood of Britain, are inhabited by the wealthy descendants of the famous Iberians. It is remarkable that Diodorus Siculus describes the Celtiberians, or Celts of Spain, as clothed in black and shaggy cloaks, made of a wool resembling the hair of goats, thus using almost the same terms which Strabo employs to describe the dress of the people of the Cassiterides. The chief island of the Scilly group is called Silura by Solinus; and perhaps the original occupants of these isles were the same Silures who are stated to have afterwards inhabited South Wales, and whose personal appearance Tacitus has expressly noted as betokening a Spanish origin.

It was undoubtedly through the extended commercial connexions of the Phœnicians that the metallic products of Britain were first distributed over the civilized world. A regular market appears to have been found for them by these enterprising traffickers in some of the most remote parts of the earth. Both Pliny and Arrian have recorded their exportation to India, where the former writer says they were wont to be exchanged for precious stones and pearls. It is probable that this commerce was at one time carried on, in part at least, through the medium of the more ancient Palmyra, or Tadmor of the Desert, as it was then called, which is said to have been founded by Solomon a thousand years before our era.*

* See in Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. vi. pp. 249, &c., a "Dissertation on the Commerce carried on in very remote ages by the Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Greeks, with the British Islands, for their ancient staple of tin, and on their extensive barter of that commodity with those of the Indian Continent; the whole confirmed by extracts from the Institutes of Menu, &c." The extracts from the

The Phœnicians, and their colonists settled in Africa and the south of Spain, appear to have retained for a long period the exclusive possession of the trade with the British islands, even the situation of which they contrived to keep concealed from all other nations. It appears from Herodotus, that, in his time, about four centuries and a half before the birth of Christ, although his countrymen knew that tin came from certain islands which, on that account, went by the name of the Cassiterides, or Tin Isles, yet all that was known of their situation was, that they lay somewhere in the north or north-west of Europe. It is generally supposed that the first Greek navigator who penetrated into the seas in this part of the world was Pytheas of Marseilles, who appears to have flourished about a hundred years after the time of Herodotus. From this celebrated colony of Marseilles something of the Greek civilization seems early to have radiated to a considerable distance over the surrounding regions ; but whether there ever was any direct intercourse between Marseilles and Britain we are not informed. The only accounts of the trade which have come down to us, represent it as carried on through the medium of certain ports on the coast of Gaul nearest to our island ; and we are probably to understand that the ships and traders belonged, not to Marseilles, but to these native Gallic towns. From the north-west coast of Gaul, the tin and lead seem to have been for a long time transported across the country to Marseilles by land carriage.

Strabo relates, on the authority of Polybius, that, when Scipio Africanus the younger made inquiry respecting the tin islands of the people of Marseilles, they professed to be totally ignorant of where they lay. From this we must infer, either that the Massilians had adopted the policy of the Carthaginians with regard to the navigation to these isles, and studiously concealed what they knew of them, or, what is more probable, that they really knew Institutes of Menu, however, hardly deserve this formal announcement ; and the essay, altogether, is, like everything else of this author's, a very flimsy performance.

nothing of the countries from which their tin came, the trade being, in fact, carried on, as we have just supposed, through the medium of the merchants of the north-west coast of Gaul. The Romans, according to the account given by Strabo in another place, had made many endeavours to discover the route to these mysterious isles, even while the trade was still in the exclusive possession of the Carthaginians. He relates, that, on one occasion, the master of a Carthaginian vessel finding himself pursued, while on his way to the Cassiterides, by one whom the Romans had appointed to watch him, purposely ran his vessel aground, and thus, although he saved his life, sacrificed his cargo; the value of which, however, was repaid to him, on his return home, out of the public treasury. But the Romans, he adds, at length succeeded in discovering the islands, and getting the tin trade, or at least a part of it, into their own hands. As Strabo died A.D. 25, this commercial intercourse of the Romans with the south-west of Britain must have long preceded the invasion of the south-eastern part of the country by Claudius, and may very possibly have preceded even the earlier invasion by Cæsar. It is remarkable that Strabo does not speak of it as having been a consequence of, or in any degree connected with, the last-mentioned event. He says, that some time after its commencement a voyage was made to the island by a Roman navigator of the name of Publius Crassus, who, finding the inhabitants of a pacific disposition, and also fond of navigation, gave them some instructions, as the words seem to imply, for carrying it on upon a larger scale. This passage has attracted less attention than it would seem to deserve; for, if the Cassiterides be, as is generally supposed, the Scilly Islands, we have here the first notice of any commercial intercourse carried on with Britain by the Romans, and a notice which must refer to a date considerably earlier than that at which it is usually assumed that the country first began to be resorted to by that people.

We are inclined to believe, however, that the trade of the Romans with the Cassiterides was entirely confined

to their colonial settlements in the south of Gaul. Of these the city of Narbonne, situated about as far to the west of the mouth of the Rhone as the Greek city of Marseilles stood to the east of it, was the chief, as well as one of the oldest, having been founded about the year B.C. 120. The historian Diodorus Siculus, who was contemporary with Julius Cæsar, has given us an account of the manner in which the trade between Britain and Gaul was carried on in his day, which, although it does not expressly mention the participation of either the Romans or any of their colonies, at least shows that the Cassiterides and the island of Britain had become better known than they were a hundred years before in the time of the younger Scipio. Diodorus mentions the expedition of Cæsar, of which he promises a detailed account in a part of his history now unfortunately lost; but he tells us a good many things respecting the island, the knowledge of which could not have been obtained through that expedition. We must, therefore, suppose that he derived his information either through an intercourse with the country which had arisen subsequent to and in consequence of Cæsar's attempt, or, as is much more probable, from the accounts of those by whom the south-western coast had been visited long before. Indeed, various facts concur to show that, however ignorant of Britain Cæsar himself may have been when he first meditated his invasion, a good deal was even then known about it by those of the Greeks and Romans who were curious in such inquiries. Cæsar notices the fact of tin, or white lead, as he calls it, being found in the country; but he erroneously places the stores of this mineral in the interior (*in mediterraneis regionibus*), probably from finding that they lay a great distance from the coast at which he landed; and he does not seem to have any suspicion that this was really the famous Land of Tin, the secret of whose situation had been long guarded with such jealous care by its first discoverers, and which his own countrymen had made so many anxious endeavours to find out. But a century and a half before this date Polybius, as he tells us himself, had intended to write

respecting Britain ; and Strabo informs us that the great historian had actually composed a treatise on the subject of the British Islands, and the mode of preparing tin. His attention had probably been drawn to the matter by the inquiries of his friend Scipio ; for Polybius, as is well known, was the companion of that celebrated general, in several of his military expeditions and other journeys. No doubt, although the people of Marseilles were unwilling or unable to satisfy the curiosity of the travellers, they obtained the information they wanted from some other quarter.* And in the title of this lost

* Camden has here expressed himself in a manner singularly contrasting with his customary, and, it may be justly added, characteristic accuracy. First, in order to prove "that it was late before the name of the Britons was heard of by the Greeks and Romans," he quotes a passage from Polybius, which in the original only implies that it was doubtful whether the north of Europe was entirely encompassed by the sea, but which he renders as if it asserted that nothing was known of Europe to the north of Marseilles and Narbonne at all. Polybius has, in fact, himself described many parts of Gaul to the north of these towns. Next he makes the historian to have been the friend, not of the younger, but of the elder Africanus, and to have travelled over Europe not about B.C. 150, but 370 years before Christ. Even if he had been the contemporary of the elder Scipio, this would be a monstrous mistake. The whole of this passage in Camden, however (it is in his chapter on the Manners of the Britons), is opposed to his own opinions as expressed in other parts of his work. The authority of Festus Avienus, which he here disclaims, he elsewhere makes use of very freely (see his chapter on the Scilly islands, at the end of the Britannia). And, whereas he contends here that Britain had never been heard of by the Greeks till a comparatively recent date, he has a few pages before a long argument to prove that it must have been known "to the most ancient of the Greeks." In the same chapter (on the Name of Britain) he quotes a passage from Pliny, in which that writer characterizes the island as famous in the writings (or records, as it may be translated) of the Greeks and Romans—"clara Græcis nostrisque monumentis."

treatise of Polybius, as quoted by Strabo, it is important to remark that we find the tin country distinctly recognized as being the British Islands, the vague or ambiguous name of the Cassiterides being dropped. It is so, likewise, in the account given by Diodorus. That writer observes that the people of the promontory of Belerium (the Bolerium of Ptolemy, and our present Land's End) were much more civilized than the other British nations, in consequence of their intercourse with the great number of foreign traders who resorted thither from all parts. This statement, written subsequently to Cæsar's expedition, warrants us in receiving that writer's assertion as to the superior refinement of the inhabitants of Kent as true only in a restricted sense. In fact, there were two points on the coast of the island separated by a long distance from each other, at which the same cause, a considerable foreign commerce and frequent intercourse with strangers, had produced the same natural effect. Diodorus goes on to describe the manner in which these ancient inhabitants of Cornwall prepared the tin which they exported. To this part of his description we shall afterwards have occasion to advert. After the tin has been refined and cast into ingots, he says, they convey it in wheeled carriages over a space which is dry at low water, to a neighbouring island, which is called Ictis ; and here the foreign merchants purchase it, and transport it in their ships to the coast of Gaul. The Ictis of Diodorus has, by the majority of recent writers, been assumed to be the Isle of Wight, the Uectis of Ptolemy, and the Vectis or Vecta of some of the Latin writers. But this seems to us altogether an untenable supposition. It is impossible to believe either that Diodorus would call the Isle of Wight an island in the neighbourhood of the promontory of Bolerium, seeing that it is distant from that promontory about 200 miles, or that the people of Bolerium, instead of carrying down their tin to their own coast, would make a practice of transporting it by land carriage to so remote a point. Least of all is it possible to conceive how a journey could be accomplished by wheeled carriages from the Land's End to the

Isle of Wight over the sands which were left dry at low water, as Diodorus says was the case. There can be no doubt whatever that Ictis was one of the Scilly Isles, between which group and the extremity of Cornwall a long reef of rock still extends, part of which appears, from ancient documents, to have formed part of the main land at a comparatively recent date, and which there is no improbability in supposing may have afforded a dry passage the whole way in the times of which Diodorus writes. The encroachments of the sea have unquestionably effected extensive changes in that part of the British coast; and at a very remote period it is evident from present appearances, as well as from facts well attested by records and tradition, that the distance between the Scilly Isles and the main land must have been very much less than it now is. "It doth appear yet by good record," says a writer of the latter part of the sixteenth century, "that, whereas now there is a great distance between the Scyllan Isles and point of the Land's End, there was of late years to speak of scarcely a brook or drain of one fathom water between them, if so much, as by those evidences appeareth that are yet to be seen in the hands of the lord and chief owner of those isles."* Some of the islands may even have been submerged in the long course of years that has elapsed since the Ictis was the mart of the tin trade; and the numerous group of islets which we now see may very possibly be only the relics left above water of the much smaller number of a considerable size, which are described as forming the ancient Cassiterides. It may be added that, if the south-west coast of Brittany, where the maritime nation of the Veneti dwelt, was, as seems most probable, the part of the continent from which the tin ships sailed, the Isle of Wight was as much out of their way as of that of the people of Bolerium. The shortest and most direct voyage for the merchants of Vannes was right across to the very point of the British coast where the tin mines were. It appears to us to admit of little doubt

* Harrison's Description of England, b. iii. c. 7.

that the Ictis of Diodorus is the same island which, on the authority of the old Greek historian, Timæus, is mentioned by Pliny under the name of Mictis, and stated to lie six days' sail *inward (introrsus)* from Britain (which length of navigation, however, the Britons accomplished in their wicker boats), and to be that in which the tin was produced. It must no doubt have taken fully the space of time here mentioned to get to the Scilly Isles from the more distant parts even of the south coast of Britain.

Diodorus goes on to inform us that the foreign merchants, after having purchased the tin at the Isle of Ictis, and conveyed it across the sea to the opposite coast of Gaul, were then wont to send it overland to the mouth of the Rhone, an operation which consumed thirty days. At the mouth of the Rhone it was no doubt purchased by the merchants of Marseilles, and at a later period also by their rivals of Narbonne, if we are not rather to suppose that the Gallic traders who brought it from Britain were merely their agents. Cæsar, however, expressly informs us that the Veneti, who occupied a part of the present Bretagne, had many ships of their own, in which they were accustomed to make voyages to Britain. From the two great emporia in the south of France the commodity was diffused over all other parts of the earth, as it had been at an earlier period from Cadiz and the other Phœnician colonies on the south coast of Spain.

It appears from Strabo, however, that the operose and tedious mode of conveyance by land carriage from the coast of Brittany to the gulf of Lyons was eventually abandoned for other routes, in which some advantage could be taken of the natural means of transportation afforded by the country. By one of these, the British goods being brought to the mouth of the Seine, in Normandy, were sent up that river as far as it was navigable, and then, being carried on horses a short distance overland, were transmitted for the remainder of the way down the Rhone, and afterwards along the coast to Narbonne and Marseilles. It is probable enough

that the Isle of Wight, which is opposite to the mouth of the Seine, may have been used as the mart of the British trade in this navigation, for which purpose it was also well adapted as lying about midway between Cornwall and Kent, and being therefore more conveniently situated than any other spot both for the supply of the whole line of coast with foreign commodities, and for the export of native produce. When the route we are now describing came to be adopted for the British trade generally, even a portion of the tin of Cornwall may have found its way to this central dépôt. But, even after land carriage came to be displaced by river navigation, a large portion of the British trade still continued to be carried on from the west coast of Gaul, through the medium both of the Loire and the Garonne. The Loire seems to have been taken advantage of chiefly to convey the exports from Narbonne and Marseilles down to the sea-coast after they had been brought by land across the country from Lyons, to which point they had been sent up by the Rhone. The Garonne was used for the conveyance to the south of France of British produce, which was sent up that river as far as it was navigable, and thence carried to its destination over land.

This is nearly all that is known respecting the commercial intercourse of Britain with other parts of the world before the country became a province of the Roman empire. The traffic both with Carthage and the Phœnician colonies in the south of Spain had of course ceased long before Cæsar's invasion ; at that date the only direct trade of the island was with the western and north-western coasts of Gaul, from the Garonne as far probably as to the Rhine ; for, in addition to the passage of commodities, as just explained, to and from Provence, the Belgic colonists, who now occupied so large a portion of the maritime districts in the south of Britain, appear also from their first settlement to have kept up an active intercourse with their original seats on the continent which stretched to the last-mentioned river. The British line of communication, on the other hand, may be presumed to have extended from the Land's End to

the mouth of the Thames ; though it was probably only at two or three points in the course of that long distance that the continental vessels were in the habit of touching. There is no evidence that any of the vessels in which the trade with the continent was carried on belonged to Britain. The island in those days seems only to have been resorted to by strangers as the native place of certain valuable commodities, and to have maintained little or no interchange of visits with foreign shores. Even from this imperfect intercourse with the rest of the world, however, the inhabitants of all this line of coast must have been enabled to keep up, as we are assured they did, a very considerably higher degree of civilization than would be found among the back-woodsmen beyond them. It is to be remembered that no small amount of the commercial spirit may exist in a country which maintains no intercourse with foreigners except in its own ports. The situation of Britain in this respect, two thousand years ago, may be likened, indeed, to that of Spitzbergen or New Zealand at present ; but the same peculiarity, which at first sight seems to us so remarkable and so unnatural, characterizes the great commercial empire of China. There the national customs and the institutions of the government have done their utmost to discourage and restrain the spirit of commercial enterprise ; but that spirit is an essential part of the social principle, and as such is unextinguishable wherever the immutable circumstances of physical situation are not adverse to its development. Hence, although their laws and traditional morality have operated with so much effect as to prevent the people of China from pushing to any extent what may be called an aggressive commerce, that is to say, from seeking markets for their commodities in foreign countries, these adverse influences have not been able so far to overcome the natural incentives arising out of their geographical position as to induce them to refrain equally from what we may call admissive commerce, or indeed to be other than very eager followers of it. The case of the early Britons may have been somewhat similar. The genius of most of the Oriental religions seems to have

been opposed to foreign intercourse of every kind, the prohibition or systematic discouragement of which the priests doubtless regarded as one of their most important securities for the preservation of their influence and authority ; and very probably such may also have been the spirit of the Celtic or Druidical religion. It is remarkable, at least, that the well ascertained Celtic tribes of Europe, though distributed for the most part along the sea-coast, have never exhibited any striking aptitude either for navigation or for any employment in connexion with the sea.

The most particular account of the exports and imports constituting the most ancient British trade is that quoted above from Strabo, and it is probably not very complete. It only adds the single article of skins to the tin and lead mentioned by Festus Avienus and others. It is probable, however, that the island was known for a few other products besides these, even before the first Roman invasion. Cæsar expressly mentions iron as found, although in small quantities, in the maritime districts. And it appears from some passages in the Letters of Cicero, that the fame of the British war-chariots had already reached Rome. Writing to Trebatius, while the latter was here with Cæsar, b.c. 55, after observing that he hears Britain yielded neither gold nor silver, the orator playfully exhorts his friend to get hold of one of the esseda of the island, and make his way back to them at Rome with his best speed. In another epistle he cautions Trebatius to take care that he be not snatched up and carried off before he knows where he is, by some driver of one of these rapid vehicles. Strabo's account of the foreign commodities imported into Britain in those days is, that they consisted of earthenware, salt, and articles of bronze, which last expression is undoubtedly to be understood as meaning not mere toys, but articles of use, in the fabrication of which bronze, as we have explained above, was the great material made use of in early times. Cæsar also testifies that all the bronze made use of by the Britons was obtained from abroad. The metal, however, as we

shall presently have occasion to show, was probably imported to some extent in ingots or masses, as well as in manufactured articles. Much of the bronze which was thus brought to them, whether in lumps of metal, or in the shape of weapons of war and other necessary or useful articles, had no doubt been formed by the aid of their own tin. Neither the Britons themselves, nor any of the foreigners who traded with them at this early period, appear to have been aware of the abundant stores of copper which the island is now known to contain. Indeed the British copper-mines have only been wrought to any considerable extent in very recent times.

There is no reasonable ground for supposing, as some writers have done, that the ancient Britons possessed any description of navigating vessels, which could properly be termed ships of war. The notion has been taken up on an inference from a passage in Cæsar, or rather from a comparison of several passages, which the language of that writer rightly understood certainly does not at all authorize. Cæsar gives us in one place an account of a naval engagement which he had with the Veneti of western Gaul, whose ships appear, from his description, to have been very formidable military engines. In a preceding chapter he had informed us, that in making preparations for their resistance to the Roman arms, the Veneti, after fortifying their towns, and collecting their whole naval strength at one point, associated with them, for the purpose of carrying on the war, the Osismii, the Lexobii, and other neighbouring tribes, and also sent for aid out of Britain, which lay directly over against their coast. But it is not said that the assistance which they thus obtained, either from Britain or any other quarter, consisted of ships. It does not even appear that it consisted of seamen; for, although it so happened that the war was terminated by the destruction of the naval power of the Veneti in the engagement we have just mentioned, preparations had evidently been made in the first instance for carrying it on by land as well as by sea. The supposition that the Britons possessed any ships at all resembling the high-riding, strong-timbered, iron-bound

vessels of this principal maritime power of Gaul—provided, amongst other things, Cæsar assures us, with chain cables (*anchoræ, pro funibus, ferreis catenis revinctæ*)—is in violent contradiction to the general bearing of all the other recorded and probable facts respecting the condition of our island and its inhabitants at that period. There is no evidence or reason for believing that they were masters of any other navigating vessels than open boats, of which it may be doubted if any were even furnished with sails. Their common boat appears to have been what is still called the currach by the Irish, and the coracle (*cwrwgyll*) by the Welsh, formed of osier twigs, covered with hide. The small boats yet in use upon the rivers of Wales and Ireland are in shape like a walnut-shell, and rowed with one paddle. Pliny, as already noticed, quotes the old Greek historian Timæus, as affirming that the Britons used to make their way to an island at the distance of six days' sail in boats made of wattles, and covered with skins; and Solinus states that, in his time, the communication between Britain and Ireland was kept up on both sides by means of these vessels. Cæsar, in his history of the Civil War, tells us that, having learned their use while in Britain, he availed himself of them in crossing rivers in Spain; and we learn from Lucan, that they were used on the Nile and the Po, as well as by the Britons. Another kind of British boat seems to have been made out of a single tree, like the Indian canoes. Several of these have been discovered. In 1736 one was dug up from a morass called Lockermoss, in Dumfries, Scotland. It was seven feet long, dilated to a considerable breadth at one end; the paddle was found near it. Another, hollowed out of a solid tree, was seen by Mr. Pennant, near Rilblain. It measured eight feet three inches long, and eleven inches deep. In the year 1720 several canoes similar to these were dug up in the marshes of the river Medway, above Maidstone; one of them so well preserved as to be used as a boat for some time afterwards. On draining Martine Muir, or Marton Lake, in Lancashire, there were found sunk at the bottom eight canoes, each made

of a single tree, much like the American canoes.* In 1834 a boat of the same description was found in a creek near the village of North Stoke, on the river Arun, Sussex. It is now in the British Museum, and measures in length thirty-five feet four inches; in depth one foot ten inches; and in width, in the middle, four feet six inches. There are three bars left at the bottom, at different distances from each other, and from the ends, which seem to have served the double purpose of strengthening it and giving firm footing to those who rowed or paddled the canoe. It seems to have been made, or at least finished, by sharpened instruments, and not by fire, according to the practice of the Indians.†

Among the useful arts practised by the ancient Britons, they must be allowed to have had some acquaintance with those relating to the metals, but how much it is not easy to determine. Both Strabo and Diodorus Siculus have briefly noticed their mode of obtaining the tin from the earth. The former observes that Publius Crassus, upon his visit to the Cassiterides, found the mines worked to a very small depth. It may be inferred from this expression, that the only mining known to the natives was that which consisted in digging a few feet into the earth, and collecting what is now called the *stream* tin, from the modern process of washing and separating the particles of the ore thus lodged by directing over their bed a stream of water. No tools of which they were possessed could have enabled them to cut their way to the veins of metal concealed in the rocks. The language of Diodorus supports the same conclusion. He speaks of the tin as being mixed with earth when it is first dug out of the mine; but, from what he adds, it would appear that the islanders knew how to separate the metal from the dross by smelting. After it was thus purified, they prepared it for market by casting it into ingots in the shape of dice. What lead they had was no doubt procured in like manner from the surface of the soil or a very small depth under it. Pliny indeed expressly states that, even in

* King's *Munimenta Antiqua*, vol. i. page 28, &c.

† *Archæologia*, vol. xxvi. p. 257, &c.

his time, this latter metal was found in Britain in great plenty lying thus exposed or scarcely covered.

There is reason to believe that some knowledge of the art of working in metals was possessed by the Britons before the Roman invasion. Moulds for spear, arrow, and axe heads have been frequently found both in Britain and Ireland;* and the discovery in 1735, on Easterly Moor, near York, of 100 axe-heads, with several lumps of metal and a quantity of cinders, may be considered sufficient testimony that at least the bronze imported into Britain was cast into shapes by the inhabitants themselves.† The metal of which the British weapons and tools were made has been chemically analyzed in modern times, and the proportions appear to be, in a spear-head, one part of tin to six of copper; in an axe-head, one of tin and ten of copper; and in a knife, one of tin to seven and a half of copper.‡

Whatever knowledge the Gauls possessed of the art of fabricating and dyeing cloth, the more civilized inhabitants of the South of Britain, having come originally from Gaul, and always keeping up a close intercourse with the people of that country, may be fairly presumed to have shared with them. The long dark-coloured mantles, in which Strabo describes the inhabitants of the Cassiterides as attired, may indeed have been of skins, but were more probably of some woollen texture. The Gauls are stated by various ancient authors to have both woven and dyed wool; and Pliny mentions a kind of felt which they made merely by pressure, which was so hard and strong, especially when vinegar was used in its manufacture, that it would resist the blow of a sword. Cæsar tells us that the ships of the Veneti of Gaul, notwithstanding their superior strength and size, had only skins for sails; and he expresses a doubt as to whether that material was not employed either from the want of

* *Archæologia*, vol. xiv. pl. lv. and vol. xv. pl. xxxiv. *Collectanea de Reb. Hibern.* vol. iv. pl. x.

† Borlase's *Cornwall*, p. 287.

‡ Meyrick's *Original Inhabitants*; and *Philosophical Transactions* for 1796, p. 395, &c.

linen or ignorance of its use. At a somewhat later period, however, it appears from Pliny that linen cloth was fabricated in all parts of Gaul. The dyes which the Britons used for their cloth were probably extracted from the same plant from which they obtained those with which they marked their skin, namely, the *isatis*, or woad. "Its colour," says a late writer, "was somewhat like indigo, which has in a great degree superseded the use of it. . . . The best woad usually yields a blue tint, but that herb, as well as indigo, when partially deoxidated, has been found to yield a fine green. . . . The robes of the fanatic British women, witches, or priestesses, were black, *vestis feralis*; and that colour was a third preparation of woad by the application of a greater heat."* Woad is still cultivated for the purposes of dyeing in France, and also, to a smaller extent, in England.

Some of these facts would seem to afford us reason for suspecting that Britain was better known even to the Roman world before the two expeditions of Cæsar than is commonly supposed, or than we should be led to infer from Cæsar's own account of those attempts. We may even doubt whether he was himself as ignorant of the country as he affects to have been. He may very possibly have wished to give to his achievement the air of a discovery as well as of a conquest. Tacitus appears to be disposed to claim for Agricola, a century and a half later, the honour of having first ascertained Britain to be an island, although even Cæsar professes no doubt about that point; and, from the language of every preceding writer who mentions the name of the country, its insular character must evidently have been well known from time immemorial. The Romans did nothing directly, and, notwithstanding all their conquests, little even indirectly, in geographical discovery; almost wherever they penetrated the Greeks or the Orientals had been before them; and any reputation gained in that field would naturally be valued in proportion to its rarity. But, however this may be, Cæsar's invasion certainly

* *Britannia after the Romans*, p. 56.

had the immediate effect of giving a celebrity to Britain which it had never before enjoyed. Lucretius, the oldest Roman writer who has mentioned Britain, is also, we believe, the only one in whose works the name is found before the date of Cæsar's visit. Of the interest which that event excited, the Letters of Cicero, to some passages of which we have already referred, written at the time both to his brother Quintus, who was in Cæsar's army, and to Atticus and his other friends, afford sufficient evidence. In the first instance, expectations seem to have been excited that the conquest would probably yield more than barren laurels; but these were soon dissipated. "It is ascertained," Cicero writes to Atticus, before the issue of the expedition was yet known at Rome, "that the approaches to the island are defended by natural impediments of wonderful vastness (*mirificis molibus*); and it is known too by this time that there is not a scruple of silver in that island, nor the least chance of booty, unless it may be from slaves, of whom you will scarcely expect to find any very highly accomplished in letters or in music."* So, also, in the epistle immediately following to the same correspondent, he mentions having had letters both from his brother and from Cæsar, informing him that the business in Britain was finished, and that hostages had been received from the inhabitants; but that no booty had been obtained, although a pecuniary tribute had been imposed (*imperata tamen pecunia*).

Although the island was not conquered by Cæsar, the way was in a manner opened to it, and its name rendered ever after familiar, by his sword and his pen. Besides, the reduction of Gaul, which he effected, removed the most considerable barrier between the Romans and Britain. After that, whether compelled to receive an imperial governor or left unattacked, it could not remain as much dissociated from the rest of the world and unvisited as before. A land of Roman arts, letters, and government,—of Roman order and magnificence, public and private,—now lay literally under the eyes of the

* Epist. ad Att. iv. 16.

natives of Britain; and it was impossible that such a spectacle should have been long contemplated, and that the intercourse which must have existed between the two closely approaching coasts could have long gone on, without the ideas and habits of the formerly secluded islanders, semibarbarians themselves and encompassed by semibarbarians, undergoing some change. Accordingly, Strabo has intimated that, even in his time, that is to say, in the reign of Augustus, the Roman arts, manners, and religion had gained some footing in Britain. It appears also, from his account, that, although no annual payment under the obnoxious name of a tribute was exacted from the Britons by Augustus, yet that prince derived a considerable revenue, not only from the presents which were made to him by the British princes, but also by means of what would certainly now be accounted a very decided exercise of sovereignty over the island, the imposition of duties or customs upon exports and imports. To these imposts, it seems, the Britons submitted without resistance; yet they must of course have been collected by functionaries of the imperial government stationed within the island, for it was a leading regulation of the Roman financial system that all such duties should be paid on goods exported before embarkation, and on goods imported before they were landed. If the duties were not paid according to this rule, the goods were forfeited. The right of inspection, and the other rights with which the collectors were invested to enable them to apportion and levy these taxes, were necessarily of the most arbitrary description; and they must have been even more than ordinarily so in a country where the imperial government was not established, and there was no regular superintending power set over them. Strabo says that a great part of Britain had come to be familiarly known to the Romans through the intercourse with it which was thus maintained.

All this implies, that the foreign commerce of the island had already been considerably extended; and such accordingly is proved to have been the case even by the catalogue—probably an incomplete one--of its

exports and imports which Strabo gives us. Among the former he mentions gold, silver, and iron, but, strangely enough, neither lead nor tin; corn, cattle, skins,—including both hides of horned cattle and the skins and fleeces of sheep,—and dogs, which he describes as possessing various excellent qualities. In those days slaves were also obtained from Britain as they now are from the coast of Africa; and it may be suspected, from Cicero's allusion already quoted, that this branch of trade was older even than Cæsar's invasion. Cicero seems to speak of the slaves as a well-known description of British produce. These several kinds of raw produce the Britons appear to have exchanged for articles the manufacture of which was probably of more value than the material, and which were, for the greater part, rather showy than useful. The imports enumerated by Strabo are ivory bridles, gold chains, cups of amber, drinking glasses, and a variety of other articles of the like kind. Still, all these are articles of a very different sort from the brass buttons and glass beads, by means of which trade is carried on with savages.

After the establishment of the Roman dominion in the country, its natural resources were no doubt much more fully developed, and its foreign trade both in the way of exportation and importation, but in the latter more especially, must have assumed altogether a new aspect. The Roman colonists settled in Britain of course were consumers of the same necessaries and luxuries as in other parts of the empire; and such of these as could not be obtained in the country were imported for their use from abroad. They must have been paid for, on the other hand, by the produce of the island, of its soil, of its mines, perhaps of its seas, and by the native manufactures, if there were any of these suited to the foreign market.

The chief export of Roman Britain, in the most flourishing times of the province, appears to have been corn. This island, indeed, seems eventually to have come to be considered in some sort as the Sicily of the northern part of the empire; and in the fourth century we find the

armies of Gaul and Germany depending in great part for their subsistence upon the regular annual arrivals of corn from Britain. It was stored in those countries for their use in public granaries. But on extraordinary emergencies a much greater quantity was brought over than sufficed for this object. The historian Zosimus relates that in the year 359, on the Roman colonies situated in the Upper Rhine having been plundered by the enemy, the Emperor Julian built a fleet of 800 barks, of a larger size than usual, which he dispatched to Britain for corn ; and that they brought over so much that the inhabitants of the plundered towns and districts received enough not only to support them during the winter, but also to sow their lands in the spring, and to serve them till the next harvest. It is probable also that Britain now supplied the continental parts of the empire with other agricultural produce as well as grain. No doubt its cattle, which were abundant even in the time of Cæsar, frequently supplied the foreign market with carcases as well as hides, and were also exported alive for breeding and the plough. The British horses were highly esteemed by the Romans both for their beauty and their training. Various Latin poets, as well as the geographer Strabo, have celebrated the pre-eminence of the British dogs above all others both for courage, size, strength, fleetness, and scent.* Cheese, also, which the natives, when they first became known to the Romans, are said not to have understood how to make, is stated to have been afterwards exported from the island in large quantities. The chalk of Britain, and probably also the lime and the marl, seem to have been held in high estimation abroad ; and an altar or votive stone is related to have been found in the seventeenth century at Domburgh, in Zealand, with an inscription testifying it to have been dedicated to a goddess named Nehalennia, for her preservation of his freight, by Secundus Silvanus, a British chalk-merchant (*Negociator Cretarius Britannianus*).

* See a curious collection of these testimonies in Camden's *Britannia*, by Gibson, i. 139-40. See also Harrison's *Description of England*, B. iii. c. 7.

We may fairly presume that the trade in the ancient metallic products of the island, tin and lead, was greatly extended during the Roman occupation. It seems to have been then that the tin-mines first began to be worked to any considerable depth, or rather that the metal began to be procured by any process which could properly be called mining. It has been supposed that convicted criminals among the Romans used to be condemned to work in the British mines. Roman coins, and also blocks of tin, with Latin inscriptions, have been found in the old tin-mines and stream-works of Cornwall. The British Museum contains several pigs of lead stamped by the Romans, which have been discovered in different parts of the country. Britain then, as now, seems to have produced much more lead than all the rest of Europe. But we have no direct information as to any actual exports of the metals from Britain in the Roman times, and can merely infer the fact from the mention which we find made of them as important products of the country, and from the other evidences we have that they were then obtained in considerable quantities. On these grounds it has been supposed that supplies were in those days obtained from Britain not only of lead and tin, but also of iron, and even of the precious metals. Tacitus expressly mentions gold and silver as among the mineral products of the island.*

The same writer adds that Britain likewise produces pearls, the colour of which, however, is dusky and livid ; but this he thinks may probably be attributed to the unskilfulness of the gatherers, who do not pluck the fish alive from the rocks, as is done in the Red Sea, but merely collect them as the sea throws them up dead. The pearls of Britain seem to have very early acquired celebrity. A tradition is preserved by Suetonius that Julius Cæsar was tempted to invade the island by the hope of enriching himself with its pearls ; and Pliny speaks of a shield studded with British pearls which, after his expedition, he dedicated to Venus, and sus-

* Agric. 12.

pended in her temple at Rome. Solinus affirms that the fact of the pearls being British was attested by an inscription on the shield, which agrees very well with Pliny's expression, that Cæsar wished it to be so understood. The oldest Latin writer, we believe, who mentions the British pearls is Pomponius Mela, who asserts that some of the seas of Britain generate pearls and gems. They are also mentioned in the second century by Aelian in his History of Animals, and by Origen in his Commentary on St. Matthew, who, although he describes them as somewhat cloudy, affirms that they were esteemed next in value to those of India. They were, he says, of a gold colour. Some account of the British pearls is also given in the fourth century by Marcellinus, who describes them, however, as greatly inferior to those of Persia. In the same age the poet Ausonius mentions those of Caledonia under the poetical figure of the white shell-berries.* But the British pearls have also been well known in modern times. Bede notices them as a product of the British seas and rivers in the eighth century. There is a chapter upon those found in Scotland, in the description of that country prefixed to Hector Boece's History, in which the writer gives an account of the manner of catching the fish in his time (the beginning of the sixteenth century). It is very different from that which Tacitus has noticed, as will appear from the passage, which is thus given in Harrison's English translation :—“They are so sensible and quick of hearing, that, although you, standing on the brae or bank above them, do speak never so softly, or throw never so small a stone into the water, yet they will descry you, and

* Ausonius, in Mosella. His expression is, “Albentes concharum germina bacca;” literally, the white berries, the buds of shells. This appears to be the origin of the verse “Gignit et insignes antiqua Britannia bacca;” quoted by Camden, and by other writers after him, from Marbodaeus, a Frenchman of the eleventh century, who wrote a Latin poem entitled “De Gemmarum Lapidumque preciosorum formis, natura, et viribus.” Of course a writer of that age can be no authority in this case.

settle again to the bottom, without return for that time. Doubtless they have, as it were, a natural carefulness of their own commodity, as not ignorant how great estimation we mortal men make of the same amongst us ; and, therefore, so soon as the fishermen do catch them, they bind their shells together, for otherwise they would open and shed their pearls, of purpose for which they know themselves to be pursued. Their manner of apprehension is this ; first, four or five persons go into the river together, up unto the shoulders, and there stand in a compass one by another, with poles in their hands, whereby they rest more surely, sith they fix them in the ground, and stay with one hand upon them ; then, casting their eyes down to the bottom of the water, they espy where they lie by their shining and clearness, and with their toes take them up (for the depth of the water will not suffer them to stoop for them), and give them to such as stand next them.” The Scotch pearls, according to Boece, were engendered in a long and large sort of mussel, called the horse-mussel. On the subject of the origin of the pearl he follows Pliny’s notion. These mussels, he says, “ early in the morning, in the gentle, clear, and calm air, lift up their upper shells and mouths a little above the water, and there receive of the fine and pleasant breath or dew of heaven, and afterwards, according to the measure and quantity of this vital force received, they first conceive, then swell, and finally product the pearl.” “ The pearls that are so got in Scotland,” he adds, “ are not of small value ; they are very orient and bright, light and round, and sometimes of the quantity of the nail of one’s little finger, as I have had and seen by mine own experience.” In his own Description of England, also, written about the middle of the sixteenth century, Harrison notices those still to be found in that part of the island. He accounts for their having fallen into disrepute in a curious way. “ Certes,” he writes, “ they are to be found in these our days, and thereto of divers colours, in no less numbers than ever they were of old time. Yet are they not now so much desired because of their smallness, and also for other causes,

but especially sith church-work, as copes, vestments, albes, tunicles, altar-cloths, canopies, and such trash are worthily abolished, upon which our countrymen superstitiously bestowed no small quantities of them. For I think there were few churches or religious houses, besides bishops' mitres, books, and other pontifical vestures, but were either thoroughly fretted or notably garnished with huge numbers of them." He adds, "I have at sundry times gathered more than an ounce of them, of which divers have holes already entered by nature, some of them not much inferior to great peason (peas) in quantity, and thereto of sundry colours, as it happeneth among such as are brought from the easterly coast to Saffron Walden in Lent, when for want of flesh stale stinking fish and welked mussels are thought to be good meat, for other fish is too dear amongst us when law doth bind us to use it. They (pearls) are also sought for in the latter end of August, a little before which time the sweetness of the dew is most convenient for that kind of fish which doth engender and conceive them, whose form is flat, and much like unto a lempit. The further north, also, that they be found, the brighter is their colour, and their substances of better value, as lapidaries do give out." In another place, Harrison mentions, as found in England, what he calls mineral pearls, "which," he says, "as they are for greatness and colour most excellent of all other, so they are digged out of the main land, and in sundry places far distant from the shore." Camden, and his translator, Gibson, have given us an account of pearls found in the river Conway in their time. "The pearls of this river," says the latter, "are as large and well coloured as any we find either in Britain or Ireland, and have probably been fished for here ever since the Roman conquest, if not sooner." The writer goes on to inform us, that the British and Irish pearls are found in a large black mussel; that they are peculiar to rapid and strong rivers; and that they are common in Wales, in the North of England, in Scotland, and some parts of Ireland. They are called by the people of Caernarvonshire, *kretyn diliw*, or deluge

shells. The mussels that contain pearls are generally known by being a little contracted, or contorted from their usual shape. A Mr. Wynn had a valuable collection of pearls, procured from the Conway, amongst which Gibson says that he noted a stool-pearl, of the form and bigness of a lesser button mould, weighing seventeen grains. A Conway pearl presented to the queen of Charles II., by her chamberlain, Sir Richard Wynn (perhaps of the family of this Mr. Wynn), is said still to be one of the ornaments of the British crown. Cauden also speaks of pearls found in the river Irt, in Cumberland. "These," he says, "the inhabitants gather up at low water; and the jewellers buy them of the poor people for a trifle, but sell them at a good price." Gibson adds (writing in the beginning of the last century), that not long since a patent had been granted to some persons for pearl-fishing in this river; but the pearls, he says, were not very plentiful here, and were most of the dull-coloured kind, called sand-pearl. Mention is made in a paper in the Philosophical Transactions, of several pearls of large size that were found in the sixteenth century in Ireland; among the rest, one that weighed thirty-six carats.* Pennant (*Tour in Scotland, 1769*) gives an account of a pearl-fishery then carried on in the neighbourhood of Perth, in Scotland, which, though by that time nearly exhausted, had, a few years before, produced between three and four thousand pounds' worth of pearls annually. An eminent naturalist, we observe, has recently expressed some surprise that the regular fisheries which once existed for this native gem should have been abandoned.† The pearl, however, though still a gem of price, is not now held in the same extraordinary estimation as in ancient times, when it appears, indeed, to have been considered more valuable than any other gem whatever. "The chief and topmost

* Phil. Trans. for 1693, p. 659.

† Swainson on the Zoology of England and Wales, in Macculloch's Statistical Account of the British Empire, vol. i. p. 160.

place," says Pliny, " among all precious things, belongs to the pearl."*

Another product of the British waters, which was highly prized by the luxurious Romans, was the oyster. From the manner in which the oysters of Britain are mentioned by Pliny, their sweetness seems to have been the quality for which they were especially esteemed.† Juvenal speaks of them as gathered at *Rutupiæ*, now Richborough, near Sandwich.‡ Pliny also mentions as among the greatest delicacies of Britain a sort of geese which he calls *chenerotes*, and describes as smaller than the *anser*, or common goose.§

Solinus|| celebrates the great store found in Britain of the stone called the *gagates*, in English the black amber, or jetstone. This mineral, as may be seen from Pliny,¶ was held by the ancients to be endowed with a great variety of medical and magical virtues. Camden mentions it as found on the coast of Yorkshire. "It grows," he says, "upon the rocks, within a chink or cliff of them; and before it is polished looks reddish and rusty, but after, is really (as Solinus describes it) diamond-like, black, and shining." "Certain it is," says Harrison, "that even to this day there is some plenty to be had of this commodity in Derbyshire and about Berwick, whereof rings, salts, small cups, and sundry trifling toys are made; although in many men's opinions nothing so fine as that which is brought over by merchants daily from the main." Marbodaeus, however, gives the preference to the jets of Britain over those of all other countries.

The inhabitants of Britain under the Roman government no doubt carried on traffic with the other parts of the empire in ships of their own; and the province must be supposed to have possessed a considerable mercantile as well as military navy. It is of the latter only, however, that the scanty history of the island we have during the Roman domination has preserved any mention.

* Nat. Hist. ix. 54.

† Nat. Hist. ix. 29, and xxxii. 21.

‡ Sat. iv. 141.

§ Nat. Hist. x. 29.

|| Polyhistor, 22.

¶ Nat. Hist. xxxvi. 34.

A powerful maritime force was maintained by the Romans for the defence of the east, or, as it was called, the Saxon coast; and about the end of the third century we have the first example of an exclusively British navy under the sovereignty of the famous Carausius. The navy of Carausius must have been manned in great part by his own Britons; and the superiority which it maintained for years in the surrounding seas, preserving for its master his island empire against “the superb fleets that were built and equipped,” says a contemporary writer,* “simultaneously in all the rivers of the Gauls to overwhelm him,” may be taken as an evidence that the people of Britain had by this time been long familiar with ships of all descriptions.

Wholly uncultivated as the greater part of the country was when it was first visited by the Romans, it was most probably not unprovided with a few great highways, by which communication was maintained between one district and another. Caesar could scarcely have marched his forces even so far into the interior as he did, if the districts through which he passed had been altogether without roads. Rude and imperfect enough these British roads may have been, but still they must have been to a certain extent artificial; they must have been cleared of such incumbrances as admitted of being removed, and carried in a continuous line out of the way of marshes and such other natural impediments as could not be otherwise overcome. Tacitus would seem to be speaking of the native roads, when he tells us that Agricola, on preparing in his sixth summer to push into the regions beyond the Forth, determined first to have a survey of the country made by his fleet; because it was apprehended that the roads were infested by the enemy’s forces. The old tradition is, that the southern part of the island was, in the British times, crossed in various directions by four great highways, still in great part to be traced, and known by the names of the Fosse, Watling-street, Ermine-street, and the Ichenild. The Fosse appears to

* The Orator Mamertinus, c. xii.; quoted in Britannia after the Romans, p. 10.

have begun at Totness, in Devonshire, and to have proceeded by Bristol, Cirencester, Chipping Norton, Coventry, Leicester, and Newark, to Lincoln. Watling-street is said to have commenced at Dover, to have proceeded thence through Kent, by Canterbury, to London ; then to have passed towards the north, over Hampstead Heath, to Edgeware, St. Alban's, Dunstable, Stoney Stratford, in Northamptonshire, along the west side of Leicestershire, crossing the Fosse near Bosworth, and hence to York and Chester-le-Street, in the county of Durham. Some carry it, in later times, from this point as far as to Lanark and Falkirk, in Scotland ; and others even to Caithness, at the extremity of the island. The Ermine-street is understood to have run from St. David's, in Wales, to Southampton, crossing the Fosse between Cirencester and Gloucester. The Ichenild is supposed by some to have been so called from having begun in the country of the Iceni, on the east coast. It is commonly thought to have crossed Watling-street, at Dunstable, and thence to have taken a north-easterly direction, through Staffordshire, to the west side of the island. The utmost, however, that can be conceded in regard to these roads being of British origin is, that lines of communication in such directions may have existed in the time of the Britons. It was the Romans, undoubtedly, by whom they were transformed into those elaborate and almost monumental works which their remains declare them to have been. Roads constructed to last for ever were laid down by that extraordinary people, as the first foundations of their empire, wherever they planted themselves, and seem to have been considered by them as the indispensable veins and arteries of all civilization. In Britain it is probable that they began their operations with the great native high roads, the course of which would be at least accommodated to the situation of the principal towns and other more important localities throughout the country. These they no doubt levelled, straightened, and paved, so as to fit them not only for the ordinary purposes of pedestrian and carriage communication, but also for the movements of large bodies of

infantry and cavalry in all weathers and in all seasons. But they formed also many new lines of road, leading from one to another of the many new stations which they established in all parts of the country. Camden describes the Roman ways in Britain as running in some places through drained fens, in others through low valleys, raised and paved, and so broad that they admit of two carts easily passing each other. In this country, as elsewhere, the Roman roads were in great part the work of the soldiery, of whose accomplishments skill in this kind of labour was one of the chief. But the natives were also forced to lend their assistance ; and we find the Caledonian Galgacus, in Tacitus, complaining, with indignation, that the bodies of his countrymen were worn down by their oppressors, in clearing woods and draining marshes—stripes and indignities being added to their toils. To this sort of work also criminals were sentenced, as well as to the mines. The laws of the empire made special provision for the repair of the public ways, and they were given in charge to overseers, whose duty it was to see them kept in order. The ancient document called the Itinerary of Antoninus, enumerates fifteen routes or journeys in Britain, all of which we may presume were along regularly formed high-roads ; and probably the list does not comprehend the whole number of such roads that the island contained. In every instance the distances from station to station are marked in Roman miles ; and no doubt they were indicated on the actual road by milestones regularly placed along the line. Of these, the famous London stone, still to be seen leaning against the south wall of St. Swithin's church, in Cannon-street, London, is supposed to have been the first, or that from which the others were numbered along the principal roads, which appear to have proceeded from this point as from a centre. The Roman roads in Britain have undergone so many changes since their first formation, from neglect and dilapidation on the one hand, and from many repairs which they are known to have received long after the Roman times, and in styles of workmanship very different from the Roman, that the

mode in which they were originally constructed is in most cases not very easy of discovery. One of those which had probably remained most nearly in its primitive condition was that discovered by Sir Christopher Wren under the present Cheapside, London, while he was preparing to erect the church of St. Mary-le-Bow. "Here," says the account in the *Parentalia*, "to his surprise, he sunk about eighteen feet deep through made ground, and then imagined he was come to the natural soil and hard gravel; but, upon full examination, it appeared to be a Roman causeway of rough stone, close and well rammed, with Roman brick and rubbish at the bottom for a foundation, and all firmly cemented. This causeway was four feet thick. Underneath this causeway lay the natural clay, over which that part of the city stands, and which descends at least forty feet lower." Wren eventually determined to erect the tower of the church upon the Roman causeway, as the firmest foundation he could obtain, and the most proper for the lofty and weighty structure he designed. Some of the other Roman roads in Britain, however, and especially those connecting some of the lines of military posts, were constructed in a more ambitious style of workmanship than appears to have been here employed—being paved, like the famous Appian way and others in Italy, with flat stones, although of different sizes, yet carefully cut to a uniform rectangular shape, and closely joined together. Some of our great roads still in use were originally formed by the Romans, or were used at least in the Roman times. One example is the great western road leading to Bath and Bristol, at least for a considerable part of its course.*

There has been much speculation and controversy on the subject of the description of Money in use among the ancient Britons. Caesar's statement is, distinctly, that

* In the "United Service Journal" for January, 1836, is an account of a survey of the Roman Road from Silchester to the station on the Thames called Pontes, made shortly before by the officers studying at the Senior Department of the Royal Military College.

they had no coined money. Instead of money, he says, they used pieces either of bronze or of iron, adjusted to a certain weight. There is some doubt, owing to the disagreement of the manuscripts, as to whether he calls these pieces of metal rings, or thin plates, or merely tallies or cuttings (*taleæ*) ; but the most approved reading is rings. A curious disquisition on this ring-money of the Celtic nations was published a few years ago by Sir William Betham.* Specimens of this primitive currency, according to Sir William, have been found in great numbers in Ireland, not only of bronze, but also of gold and silver. Sometimes the form is that of a complete ring, sometimes that of a wire or bar, merely bent till the two extremities are brought near to each other. In some cases the extremities are armed with flattened knobs, in others they are rounded out into cup-like hollows. Sometimes several rings are joined together at the circumferences ; other specimens consist of rings linked into one another. The most important peculiarity, however, distinguishing these curious relics, and that which Sir William Betham conceives chiefly proves them to have really served the purposes of money, is, that, upon being weighed, by far the greater number of them appear to be exact multiples of a certain standard unit. The smallest of gold which he had seen, he says, weighed twelve grains, or half a pennyweight ; and of others, one contained this quantity three times, another five, another ten, another sixteen, another twenty-two, another four hundred and eighty (a pound troy), and another five hundred and thirty-four. The case he affirms to be similar both with those of silver, and those of bronze. All, he says, with a very few exceptions, which may easily be accounted for on the supposition of partial waste or other injury, weigh each a certain number of half pennyweights. The smallest specimens even of the bronze ring-money are quite as accurately balanced as those of the more valuable metals ; and among these bronze specimens, indeed, he states, that, after having weighed a great many, he has

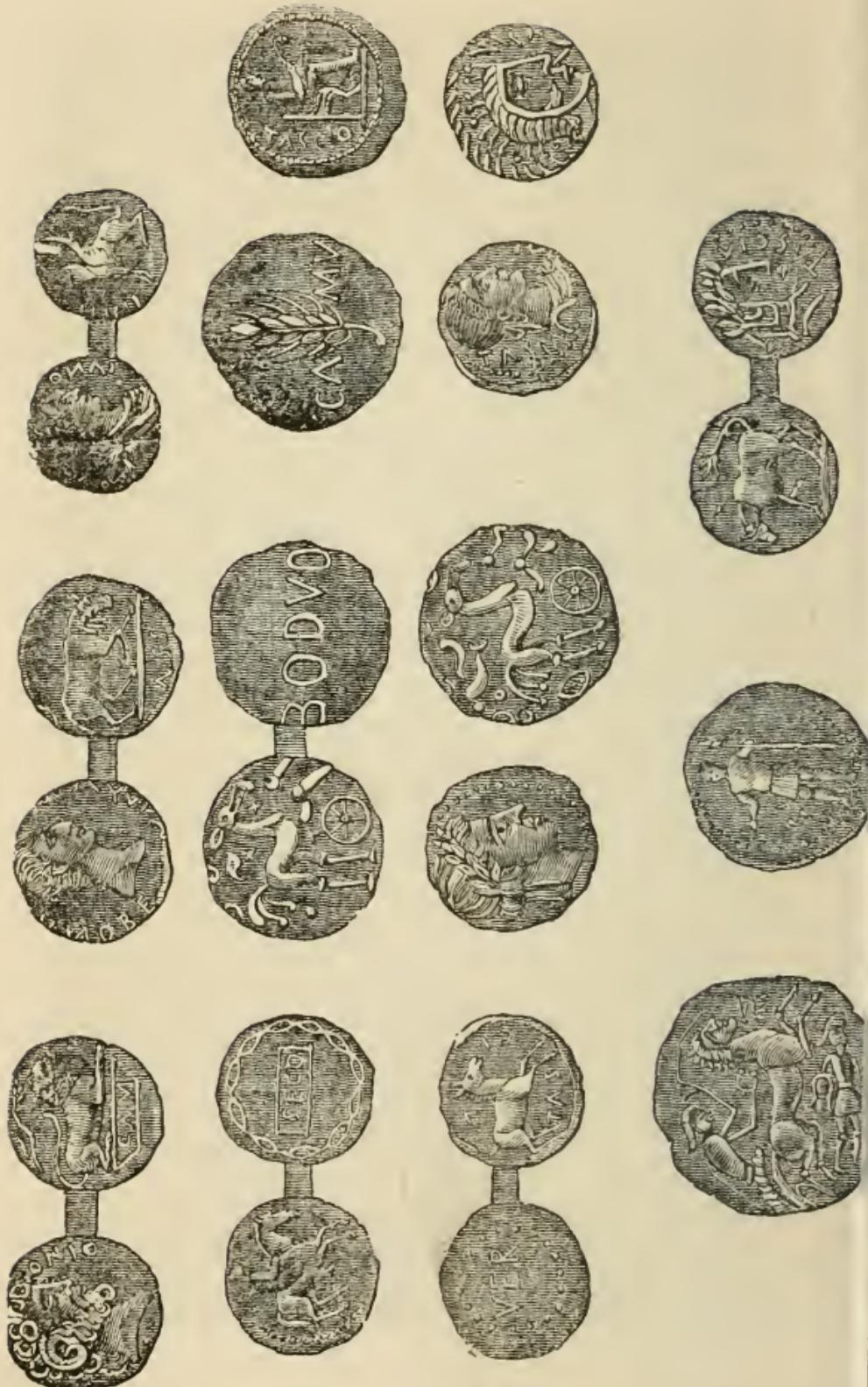
* Papers read before the Royal Irish Academy, 4to., Dublin, 1836.

never found a single exception to their divisibility into so many half pennyweights. It would thus appear that the ancient Celtic scale was the same with that which we now call troy weight. Sir William conjectures that the Latin *uncia*, an ounce, is the Celtic word *unsha*, which he says signifies one-sixth ; in which case we must suppose the original integral weight of which the ounce was a fraction to have been half our present pound troy. " To what remote period of antiquity," he observes, " do these singular facts carry us back ! To many ages before the time of Cæsar, or even Herodotus. The latter speaks of the Lydians as the first who coined metallic money, at least six centuries before our era. These are no visionary speculations ; we have here the remains and imperishable relics of those early times to verify the whole ; and recent investigations and discoveries, in a most singularly convincing manner, come to our aid, by showing that the fresco paintings in the tombs of Egypt exhibit people bringing, as tribute to the foot of the throne of Pharaoh, bags of gold and silver rings, at a period before the exodus of the Israelites." These rings, however, are not the only specimens that have been found of the substitutes used by the Britons before the introduction of coined money. Both in barrows and elsewhere there have been occasionally turned up hoards of what has all the appearance of being another species of primitive currency, consisting of small plates of iron, mostly thin and ragged, and without any impression.

Of British coined money the description which is apparently of greatest antiquity is that of which the specimens present only certain pictorial figures, without any legends or literal characters. Of this sort of coins a considerable collection was discovered about the middle of the last century, on the top of Carnbre Hill, in Cornwall. Of these, some were stamped with figures of horses, oxen, hogs, and sheep ; a few had such figures of animals on one side, and a head apparently of a royal personage on the other. All of them were of gold ; and perhaps it was only money made of the more precious metals which it was thought necessary at first to take the

trouble of thus impressing. When the convenience of the practice had been experienced, and perhaps its application facilitated, it would be extended to the bronze as well as to the gold and silver currency. Although even that point has been disputed, it may be admitted as most probable that the Carnbre coins were really British money, that is to say, that they were not only current in Britain, but had been coined under the public authority of some one or more of the states of the island. This we seem to be entitled to infer, from the emblematic figures impressed on them, which distinguish them from any known Gallic or other foreign coins, and are at the same time similar to those commonly found on what appears to be the British money of a somewhat later period. The questions, however, of when, where, and by whom they were coined, still remain. Although the figures upon them are peculiar, they still bear a general resemblance to the money, or what has been supposed to be the money, of the ancient Gauls ; and, as well from this circumstance as from the whole character of the early British civilization, which appears to have been mainly borrowed from Gaul, we may presume that they were either fabricated in that country, or were at least the work of Gallic artists. It is remarkable that these coins are all formed of pure gold ; and Diodorus Siculus informs us, that in no articles which they made of gold did the Gauls mix any alloy with the precious metal. As to their date, it would seem to be subsequent to the time of Cæsar, since, according to his account, as we have just seen, the Britons were then unacquainted with the use of coined money of any description ; and it may be placed with most probability in the interval between his invasion and that of the Emperor Claudius—a period, as we have already endeavoured to show, during which British civilization must have made a very considerable, though unrecorded, progress.

Besides this merely pictured metallic money, however, there exist numerous British coins, or what bear the appearance of being such, which are marked not only with figures of various kinds, but also with legends in



EARLY BRITISH COINS.

Roman characters. One of these, from having the letters *Sego* inscribed upon it, has been attributed to Segonax, who is mentioned by Cæsar as one of the four kings of Kent; but it is obvious that upon such an inference as this no reliance can be placed. The greater number of the coins in question bear, either in full or abbreviated, the name of Cunobelinus, who is said to have lived in the reign of Augustus. Some of these have the name *Cunobelin* at full length; one has *Cunobelinus Re*, the latter word being probably the Latin *Rex*; others have the abbreviations *Cun*, *Cuno*, *Cunob*, or *Cunobe*. Several have, in addition, what has been supposed to be the abbreviated name of their place of coinage; being most frequently *Cam*, or *Camu*, for Camulodunum, as it is conjectured; in one instance *Ver*, perhaps for Verulamium; in other cases *No*, or *Novane*, or *Novanit*, of which no probable interpretation has been given. And in addition to these inscriptions, the greater number present the singular word *Tascia*, or *Tascio*, either written at length, or indicated by two or more of its commencing letters. This word has given occasion to much disputation; but perhaps nothing has been proposed on the subject so probable as Camden's suggestion, who conceives that the word, derived apparently from the Latin *taxatio*, signified, in the British language, a tribute, or tribute-money. The figures upon these coins of Cunobelius are very various. Some have a head, probably that of the king, occasionally surrounded with what seems to be a fillet of pearls, in allusion, we may suppose, to the ancient fame of the island for that highly prized gem; others have a naked full length human figure, with a club over his shoulder; many have the figure of a horse, sometimes accompanied by a wheel, which has been supposed to convey an allusion to the formation of highways, but perhaps is rather intended to indicate the national war-chariot: a crescent, an ear of corn, a star, a comet, a tree, a hog, a dog, a sheep, an ox, a lion, a sphinx, a centaur, a Janus, a female head, a woman riding on an animal like a dog, a man playing on a harp, are some of the representations that have been detected on others.

One shows what evidently appears to be a workman in the act of making money; he is seated in a chair, and holds a hammer in his hand, while a number of pieces lie before him. About forty of these coins of Cunobeline have been discovered. Many others also exist, which, from the names, or fragments of names inscribed on them, have been assigned to Boadicea, Cartismandua, Caractacus, Venutius, and other British sovereigns. The legends on most of these, however, are extremely obscure and dubious. What is somewhat remarkable is, that no two, we believe, have been found of the same coinage. They are almost all more or less dish-shaped, or hollowed on one side—a circumstance which is common also to many Roman coins, and may be supposed to have been occasioned by the want of the proper guards to prevent the metal from being bent over the edges of the die by the blow of the hammer. The British coins thus inscribed with Roman characters are some of them of gold, some of silver, some of bronze, some of copper. Unlike also to the coins, mentioned above, without legends, all of them that are formed of the more precious metals are much alloyed.

It must be confessed that the whole subject of these supposed British coins, notwithstanding all the disputation to which they have given rise, is still involved in very considerable obscurity. It has even been denied that they ever served the purposes of a currency at all. "They are works," observes a late writer, "of no earlier date than the apostasy and anarchy after the Romans. Moreover, they were not money. They were Bardic works belonging to that numerous family of Gnostic, Mithriac, or Masonic medals, of which the illustration has been learnedly handled in Chifflet's 'Abraxas Proteus,' Von Hammer's 'Baphometus,' the Rev. R. Walsh's 'Essay on Ancient Coins,' and (as applicable to these very productions) the Rev. E. Davies's 'Essay on British Coins.' The coins engraved by Dom. B. de Montfaucon as remnants of ancient Gaulish money are productions of similar appearance and of the same class. Paraeelsus alludes to them as money coined by the

gnomes and distributed by them among men. Their uses have never been known ; but I explain them thus. Money is a ticket entitling the bearer to goods of a given value. . . . Masonic medals were tickets entitling one initiate to receive assistance from another. It may be objected, that there was no great difficulty of stealing or forging them. True ; but to be a beneficial holder of these baubles it was necessary that you should be able to explain the meaning of all the devices upon them. According to the sort of explanation given by the party, it would appear whether he was an authorized holder, and, if such, what rank of initiation he had attained, and consequently to what degree of favour and confidence he was entitled. The names selected to adorn these British medals are unequivocally marked with hatred for the Romans, and love for the memory of those Britons who warred against them ; and they imply an exhortation and a compact to expel and exclude the Roman nation from the island.”* This view is supported by some plausible arguments ; but it is far from being altogether satisfactory. The denial, however, of the title of these coins or medals to be accounted a species of ancient money, is no mere piece of modern scepticism. Camden, though he inclines to a different opinion, expresses himself upon the point with the greatest hesitation. “ For my part,” he says, “ I freely declare myself at a loss what to say to things so much obscured by age ; and you, when you read these conjectures, will plainly perceive that I have groped in the dark.” “ Whether this sort of money passed current in the way of trade and exchange,” he observes in conclusion, “ or was at first coined for some special use, is a question among the learned. My opinion (if I may be allowed to interpose it) is this. After Cæsar had appointed how much money should be paid yearly by the Britons, and they were oppressed under Augustus with the payment of customs, both for exporting and importing commodities, and had, by degrees, other taxes laid upon them, namely, for corn-grounds, plantations, groves, pasturage of greater and lesser cattle, as being

* *Britannia after the Romans*, pp. 218, &c.

now in the condition of subjects, not of slaves; I have thought that such coins were first stamped for these uses; for greater cattle with a horse, for lesser with a hog, for woods with a tree, and for corn-growth with an ear of corn; but those with a man's head seem to have been coined for poll-money. Not but I grant that afterwards these came into common use. Nor can I reconcile myself to the judgment of those who would have the hog, the horse, the ear, the Janus, &c., to be the arms of particular people or princes; since we find that one and the same prince and people used several of these, as Cunobeline stamped upon his coins a hog, a horse, an ear, and other things. But whether this tribute-money was coined by the Romans, or the provincials, or their kings, when the whole world was taxed by Augustus, I cannot say. One may guess them to have been stamped by the British kings, since Britain, from the time of Julius Cæsar to that of Claudius, lived under its own laws, and was left to be governed by its own kings, and since also they have stamped on them the effigies and titles of British princes."

After the establishment of the Roman dominion in the island, the coins of the empire would naturally become the currency of the new province; and indeed Gildas expressly states that from the time of Claudius it was ordained by an imperial edict that all money sent among the Britons should bear the imperial stamp. These expressions, by the by, would rather seem to countenance the opinion, that coined money not bearing the imperial stamp had been in circulation in the country before the publication of the edict. Great numbers of Roman coins of various ages and denominations have been found in Britain. "There are prodigious quantities found here," observes Camden, "in the ruins of demolished cities, in the treasure-coffers or vaults which were hidden in that age, and in funeral urns; and I was very much surprised how such great abundance should remain to this day, till I read that the melting down of ancient money was prohibited by the imperial constitutions."

It is highly probable, also, that some of this imperial

money was coined in Britain, where the Romans may be presumed to have established mints, as they are known to have done in their other provinces. There are several coins extant both of Carausius and of Allectus, and these it can hardly be doubted were the productions of a British mint. It is remarkable that in the sepulchral barrows there has been found imperial money of the times of Avitus (A.D. 455), of Anthemius (A.D. 467—472), and even of Justinian (A.D. 527—565). Many of the Roman coins, also, or imperial medals struck upon particular occasions, from the time of Claudius, bear figures or legends relating to Britain, and form interesting illustrations of the history of the island.*

* See upon this subject, "The Coins of the Romans relating to Britain," by J. G. Akerman, 12mo. Lond. 1836.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD. A.D. 449--1066.

BRITAIN, as an island, and one of the largest in the world, as well as from its nearness to the continent of Europe, would seem to have been intended by nature for the residence of a navigating and commercial people, and it might be supposed that any people who had obtained the occupation of it would be speedily turned to navigation and commerce by the natural temptations and advantages of their position. The political state of a country, however, and its social circumstances generally, as well as the condition of the rest of the world and the spirit of the time, may all be so unfavourable as long effectually to counteract these advantages of geographical position, and even the genius and the old habits of the people themselves.

Of the successive nations that obtained possession of the south of Britain within the period of authentic history, the Gallic colonists of the time of Cæsar were in too early a stage of civilization to hold any considerable intercourse with the rest of the world ; and the Romans who succeeded them, although they necessarily maintained a certain connexion both with the central and other parts of the extended empire to which they belonged, were of a stock that had always shown itself anti-commercial in genius and policy. But the Saxons, although they had not been in circumstances to turn their skill in navigation to commercial purposes, had long before their conquest of our island been accustomed to roam the seas, and were famous for their naval enterprises. We read of predatory warfare carried on by the different Germanic nations in small and light vessels on rivers, and even along the adjacent parts of the sea-coast, so early as before the middle of the first century. In the year 47, as we learn from Tacitus, the Chauci,

dwelling along the Batavian coast, ravaged in this manner the neighbouring coast of Gaul, under the conduct of their countryman Gannascus, who had long served in the Roman armies.* It is probable that it was in the imperial service Gannascus acquired his knowledge of naval warfare, or at least the general military education which fitted him to train and command the Chauci in this expedition. In little more than twenty years after this we find the Roman fleet on the Rhine partly manned by Batavians,† and even a Batavian fleet under the command of Paulus Civilis, another individual of that nation who had been educated in the Roman armies, giving battle to the naval forces of the empire.‡ In the course of the next two hundred years the German nations generally appear to have improved upon the instruction and experience thus gained ; and both the Saxons and others became distinguished for their familiarity with the sea and for their naval exploits. About the year 240 the union, under the name of Franks, of the various tribes of the Lower Rhine and the Weser laid the foundation for those more extensive predatory incursions upon the neighbouring countries, both by sea and land, by which the barbarians of the north-west first assisted those of the north-east in harassing and enfeebling the Roman empire, and afterwards secured their share in its division. One remarkable incident has generally been noted as having given a great impulse to these expeditions, what Gibbon has called “the successful rashness” of a party of Franks that had been removed by the Emperor Probus from their native settlements to the banks of the Euxine. “A fleet,” to give the story as he tells it, “stationed in one of the harbours of the Euxine, fell into the hands of the Franks ; and they resolved, through unknown seas, to explore their way from the mouth of the Phasis to that of the Rhine. They easily escaped through the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and, cruising along the Mediterranean, indulged their appetite for revenge and plunder, by frequent descents on the unsus-

* Tac. Annal. xi. 18. † Tac. Hist. iii. 16.

‡ Id. v. 23.

peeting shores of Asia, Greece, and Africa. The opulent city of Syracuse, in whose port the navies of Athens and Carthage had formerly been sunk, was sacked by a handful of barbarians, who massacred the greatest part of the trembling inhabitants. From the island of Sicily the Franks proceeded to the Columns of Hercules, trusted themselves to the ocean, coasted round Spain and Gaul, and, steering their triumphant course through the British Channel, at length finished their surprising voyage by landing in safety on the Batavian or Frisian shores. The example of their success, instructing their countrymen to conceive the advantages and to despise the dangers of the sea, pointed out to their enterprising spirit a new road to wealth and glory."

This event happened about the year 280. Immediately after this time we read of the commencement of ravages on the coasts of Gaul, of Belgium, and of Britain, by assailants who are called Germans by Aurelius Victor, and Saxons by Eutropius. They appear to have been a mixture of Franks and Saxons, which latter name ere long began to be also distinguished as that of another military confederacy of the Germanic nations not less powerful than the Franks. In maritime affairs, indeed, the Saxons soon took the lead; and, while the Franks pushed their conquests by land, the Saxon name became a terror to all the neighbouring sea-coasts. Yet their marine was still of the rudest description. "If the fact," says Gibbon, "were not established by the most unquestionable evidence, we should appear to abuse the credulity of our readers by the description of the vessels in which the Saxon pirates ventured to sport in the waves of the German Ocean, the British Channel, and the Bay of Biscay. The keel of their large flat-bottomed boats was framed of light timber, but the sides and upper works consisted only of wicker, with a covering of strong hides. . . . But the daring spirit of the pirates braved the perils both of the sea and of the shore: their skill was confirmed by the habits of enterprise; the meanest of their mariners was alike capable of handling an oar, of rearing a sail, or of conducting a vessel; and

the Saxons rejoiced in the appearance of a tempest, which concealed their design, and dispersed the fleets of the enemy." The Romans now found it necessary to fit out and maintain a fleet expressly for the protection of the coasts of Britain and Gaul. The command of this armament, which was stationed in the harbour of Boulogne, was given to Carausius. His revolt soon after, and his establishment of an empire for himself in Britain, where he endeavoured to maintain his power by alliances with those very nations of the north whom he had been appointed to repress, and by enlisting the barbarians both among his land and sea forces, was another event in the highest degree favourable to the progress of the Saxons in navigation and naval warfare. It was a new lesson to them both in ship-building and in tactics, which must have made their boldness and hardihood much more formidable than ever. The empire of Carausius had lasted for seven years, when it was overthrown by his death in 294.

In the next century we find the Saxons almost the acknowledged masters of the northern seas, and so constantly infesting Britain that the east coast of the island had come to be known by the name of the Saxon coast, and was strongly fortified, and put under the charge of a warden, whose especial duty it was to repel their assaults. Their defeat by Theodosius, in the neighbourhood of the Orkney Islands, in 368, for which he obtained the surname of *Saxonicus*, was not accomplished till the barbarians had sustained several encounters with the Roman fleet; and although it seems to have deterred them for a long time after from repeating their descents upon Britain, and although, after the example of the Franks, they were now also beginning to employ their strength more than formerly in military operations by land, they certainly did not abandon the field of their elder renown. The keels of Hengist and Horsa were cruising in the British Channel when they received the invitation of Vortigern in 449; and it was their command of the seas that, by enabling them to maintain all along a free communication with the continent, and also to

make their descents upon the island at the most advantageous points, chiefly contributed to gain for the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, the possession of Britain.

These new settlers, therefore, the fathers of the future population of the country, and the founders of its political institutions and its social state, were by long use a thoroughly navigating race, and, having obtained their island stronghold, they would naturally, it might be thought, proceed both to fortify it by securing the dominion of the surrounding seas, and to make it the centre of a great commercial empire. But, although all this was to come to pass in process of time, nothing of the kind happened in the first instance ; and the Saxons, after their settlement in Britain, completely neglected the sea, now more truly their proper element than ever, for so long a period, that, when they did at last apply themselves again to maritime affairs, their ancient skill and renown in that field of enterprise must have been a mere tradition, if it was so much as remembered among them at all, and could have lent no aid in directing or even in exciting their new efforts. It was not till the reign of Alfred, towards the end of the ninth century, that the Saxons of England appear ever to have thought of building a ship, at least for war ; and it may be doubted if before that time they had even any trading vessels of their own. Ever since their settlement in Britain they seem to have wholly abandoned the sea to their kindred who remained in their native seats in the north of Germany and around the Baltic,—the Northmen or Danes, by whom they were destined to be succeeded in their career of rapine and conquest.

This latter race of sea-rovers had adopted a policy different from that which had been followed both by the Franks and the Saxons. These two nations, or rather great confederacies of various nations, although they had both first made themselves formidable at sea, had, as we have seen, successively abandoned that field of adventure as soon as they had entered upon the course of land conquest, or at least as soon as they had secured the possession the first of Gaul, the second of Britain, and

had established their Gothic sovereignties in these fair provinces of the former western empire. But the Danes, who were also a great confederacy,—the several Scandinavian nations of the Danes, the Swedes, and the Norwegians, being all comprehended under that name,—continued to seek plunder and glory on the waters long after they had founded a multitude of kingdoms on shore. These, however, were not kingdoms carved, like the possessions of the Franks and Saxons, out of the rich and cultivated Roman territory, but were all confined to the bleak and barbarous coasts of the Baltic and the neighbouring seas, where the Romans had never been. Down to the close of the eighth century, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were each parcelled out into numerous independent principalities, the chiefs of all of which were at the same time also either sea-kings themselves, or more usually were the fathers or elder brothers of the bold piratical captains, who rejoiced in that designation ; the custom being for the younger sons of the royal house to be sent to seek their fortune on the ocean, while the eldest was kept at home to inherit his ancestral throne. But the class of *sae konungen*, or sea-kings, otherwise called *vikingr*, which is supposed to mean kings of the bays, where they had their head stations, was very numerous, and comprehended many individuals who were not of royal extraction. Piracy was the common resource of the younger sons of all the best families among these Scandinavian nations ; and the sea was regarded as a field whereon a bold adventurer might rear for himself a fabric both of wealth and dominion almost as stable as could be founded on the land. In the course of the ninth century in all the three countries central sovereignties had arisen, and absorbed or reduced to dependence the rest of the chieftainships ; but this change did not for some time affect the free movements of the *vikingr*. They continued as heretofore to maintain their independence on their own element. The new state of things in the north only had the effect of giving a new direction to their enterprises. Formerly the natural prey of the sea-kings of the Baltic had been

the territories of the petty land-sovereigns along the coasts of that sea ; for their common origin formed no general or permanent bond between the two classes, in circumstances so nearly resembling those under which the various descriptions of wild beasts are thrown together in a forest. But now, that something of the strength of union and consolidation had been acquired by the northern kingdoms, they had become less easily assailable ; and the captains of the piratical armaments began to look out for adventures and plunder farther from home. The coasts of England, of Scotland, of Ireland, and of France, became henceforth the chief scenes of their ravages. Nor had civilization yet advanced so far in any of the Scandinavian countries as to discountenance these expeditions. On the contrary, the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish kings were no doubt well pleased to see their natural enemies and the most turbulent spirits among their subjects thus finding occupation elsewhere ; and, as for the popular feeling on the subject, the old national custom of roaming the seas was still universally held to be among the most honourable of employments. Navigation can be cherished and promoted only by commerce or by war ; it never has flourished in the absence of the former except under the nourishment and support afforded by the latter. It was the want of both war and commerce that brought about its decay and extinction among the Franks and Saxons, after their conquests of Gaul and Britain ; it was preserved among the Danes through the habits and necessities of that predatory life upon which they were thrown for some centuries by the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed. The power of this third northern confederacy grew up during a period when the spirit of foreign conquest and settlement, generated among the barbarous nations by the dismemberment of the Roman empire, was still in full vigour, but when the means of satisfying it had been taken away in consequence of the previous occupation of Gaul, of Britain, of Spain, and of all the other Roman provinces, by those whose fortune it had been to be earlier in the movement. The Danes were in this way

left to the piratical maritime warfare in which they soon became so distinguished ; it was the natural result of the ambition of foreign conquest checked by the want of any territory lying open for them to invade and overrun. Still this was in its nature only an intermediate and temporary resource. The instinct of aggression, which it could only imperfectly gratify, it yet fostered, and was constantly strengthening and arming with new power for the full attainment of what it sought. The Danes, under this discipline, were becoming every day more warlike and formidable, and more capable of achieving foreign conquests, whenever they should make the attempt. On the other hand, the Franks and Saxons, whom they would have to drive before them, were, in the unassailed security of their rich and ample settlements, gradually losing the use of war and the power of defending the possessions they had gained. This was the state of circumstances when the Danes commenced, in the latter part of the eighth century, their descents upon the coasts of France, England, Scotland, and Ireland. These Northmen were now merely repeating what had been done by their kindred, the Franks and Saxons, three or four centuries before. They too, from mere plundering incursions, with which they had hitherto satisfied themselves, were about to rise in their turn to the grander operations of invasion, conquest, and colonization, now that occasion presented itself, and called them to that career. This was the proper consummation of their system of sea-kingship ; the true end and development of their long course of piracy and desultory warfare. That was but the impatient restlessness of the animating passion repelled, baffled, and in some sort imprisoned ; this was its free and natural action. The new path of enterprise, accordingly, immediately attracted to itself all the disposable courage, activity, and resources of the North. It was not left to the sea-kings alone ; the most potent of those of the land joined the great national movement, which promised to add new realms to those they already possessed, or to enable them to exchange their niggardly

ancestral islets and strips of sea-coast for broader domains in a sunnier clime. By means of these expeditions the pressure and uneasiness occasioned by the opposition between the old piratical system and the new order of things that was now growing up in the Scandinavian kingdoms were at once relieved ; and, while occupation and settlements were found for the more active and adventurous who chose to abandon their native country, more room was also made, and more quiet secured, for those that remained behind.

By these bold sea-captains and their crews was a great part of England taken possession of and occupied ; and thus, a second time, did the country receive an accession of the kind of population most appropriate to it as an island, —a race of navigating spirit and habits. The Normans also, we may anticipate so far as just to remark, were, before they won their settlements here and in France, pirates as well as the Danes and the Saxons ; in fact they were merely a division of the Danish vikingr and their companies. So that, of the several races that were eventually mingled together to form the English people, no one had to be gradually turned towards maritime affairs by the force of the new circumstances in the midst of which it was placed ; all brought along with them an old familiarity with the sea, on which they had in fact lived, and conquered, and maintained dominion, before they had ever made good any footing for themselves upon land.

Notwithstanding all this, however, we find each race, as soon as it has established itself in the country, almost wholly abandoning the former theatre of its exploits, and attaching itself to the land as exclusively as if the sea had been left a thousand miles behind. We cannot discover that either the previous navigating habits of the Saxons and Danes who successively settled in Britain, or the natural advantages of their new position, prompted them to any considerable efforts of commercial enterprise, after they had lost the motive which had originally impelled them to the sea. Nay, as we have already observed, the ships in which, and through which, they had made their conquests, were abandoned by them even as in-

struments of protection ; they had served their turn in aggressive warfare, but in the defensive warfare that followed their employment was not thought of, till after long and disastrous experience of the insufficiency of other military means. Such being the case, we need not wonder that commercial navigation was neglected. The navigating spirit, in fact, will not of itself create commerce ; it appears to have been usually rather the commercial spirit that has taught a people navigation, where it has not been taught by war ; and even war does not teach it in the effective manner that commerce does, as we may see at once by comparing the Saxons or the Danes with the Phœnicians. The latter had no doubt been a commercial long before they became a navigating, a discovering, a colonizing, and a civilizing people. In the same manner it is their commercial habits, growing out of their permanent geographical position, and not their use and wont of maritime warfare, that has made the English, the descendants of these old Saxons and Danes, the great lords of the sea, planters of nations, and diffusers of civilization in the modern world.

But a power like this can only grow up under a favourable state of circumstances in the world generally, or throughout a large portion of it. The commercial empire of the ancient Phœnicians was reared during the most flourishing period of the early civilization of the east ; the commercial empire of modern Britain has in like manner arisen in the midst of the later civilization of the west. In the rude and turbulent ages that followed the overthrow of the Roman power in Europe, the existence of an extensive commerce in any hands was impossible. Almost continual wars everywhere, either between one people and another, or between two factions of the same people, or, where there was any temporary relaxation of war, the still more brutifying effects of misgovernment and oppression, left no time, no inclination, and no means for carrying on any considerable commerce. The great mass of the people were in all countries sunk in ignorance and in poverty ; their miser-

able condition hardly permitted them to aspire after the enjoyment of anything beyond the absolute necessities of existence ; they were untaught in those arts and processes of industry by which commerce is fed ; there had been little or no accumulation of capital, without which there can be no extensive commerce, nor any other species of undertaking that looks much beyond the passing day. It was only by slow degrees that Europe emerged out of this condition, and that the beginnings of modern commerce were nurtured into strength and stability.

We shall now mention the most interesting of the few facts that have been preserved relating to the foreign trade carried on by the Anglo-Saxons, in their chronological order. The first distinct notice which we have upon the subject is not of earlier date than the close of the eighth century. At this time, it appears that some English commodities were carried abroad, and probably some of those of the continent brought to this country, by the devotees who went on pilgrimage to Rome, or by persons who found it convenient to make profession of being so engaged. It is not to be supposed that these pilgrimages opened the first commercial intercourse between England and the continent ; but they undoubtedly made the communication much more frequent than it had been before. The practice established by the Romans, of exacting certain payments at each seaport, on the embarkation and landing of goods, appears to have been retained in all the new kingdoms formed out of the western empire ; and their amount probably long remained nearly the same that had been paid under the imperial *régime*. Hence the name of customs, or some equivalent term, by which they were called, as if they had been dues universally and immemorially demanded. There is a letter still extant, from the French Emperor Charlemagne to Offa, king of Mercia, and Bretwalda (or chief lord of Britain), which seems to have been the result of a negociation between the two sovereigns, respecting the exaction of these duties in the case of the English pilgrims travelling to Rome. The document must be assigned to the year 795, in which Offa died, at the latest ; and it may be re-

garded as the earliest commercial treaty on record, or perhaps that ever was entered into, between England and any other country. It runs as follows: "Charles, by the grace of God, king of the Franks and Lombards, and patrician of the Romans, to our venerable and most dear brother, Offa, king of the Mercians, greeting. First, we give thanks to Almighty God, for the sincere Catholic faith which we see so laudably expressed in your letters. Concerning the strangers, who, for the love of God and the salvation of their souls, wish to repair to the thresholds of the blessed apostles, let them travel in peace without any trouble; nevertheless, if any are found among them not in the service of religion, but in the pursuit of gain, let them pay the established duties at the proper places. We also will that merchants shall have lawful protection in our kingdom according to our command; and, if they are in any place unjustly aggrieved, let them apply to us or our judges, and we shall take care that ample justice be done to them." There is more of the letter, which it is unnecessary to quote. We gather from it that the profession of pilgrimage had already been taken advantage of as a cloak for smuggling; and, no doubt, in this way the practice gave an impulse to trade. Even the smuggler is sometimes of use; he may be the means of planting a traffic which would not have grown up without his assistance, and which, of however objectionable a character originally, may eventually assume a legitimate form, and attain to great value and importance. It is conjectured that articles in gold and silver were probably the principal commodities in which these traders from England dealt, who thus put on the guise of pilgrims with the view of cheating the custom-house of its dues. Such articles, being of small bulk, would be easily concealed in a traveller's baggage; and it appears that even at this early age the English works in gold and silver were famous over the continent.* Already, it may be noted, there seem to have been Jews resident in England, and even in the northern kingdom of Northumberland; for among the Excerpts of Archbishop Egbert of York--

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, i. 248.

which must have been compiled between the years 735 and 766—we find a transcript of a foreign canon, prohibiting Christians from imitating the manners of that people, or partaking of their feasts. The Jews have been the introducers or chief encouragers of foreign commerce, especially in jewellery, articles made of the precious metals, and other such luxuries, in most of the countries of modern Europe.

From this date the history of Anglo-Saxon commerce is again nearly a blank till we come down to the reign of Alfred. Of this illustrious prince it is recorded that he cultivated an intercourse with distant countries, in which he seems to have had in view the extension of commerce as well as other objects. He appears to have kept up a frequent communication with Rome; and his biographer Asser states, that he also corresponded with Abel, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who sent him several valuable presents of Oriental commodities. His embassy to the Christians in India is mentioned, not only by Malmesbury and other authorities of the next age, but by the contemporary compiler of the Saxon Chronicle, who says that Swithelm, Bishop of Shireburn, made his way to St. Thomas, and returned in safety. Malmesbury gives Sighelm as the name of the adventurous bishop, and relates that he brought back from India aromatic liquors and splendid jewels; some of the latter, the historian says, were still remaining in the treasury of his church when he wrote, in the twelfth century. Sighelm is stated to have left England in the year 883, and to have gone in the first instance to Rome, from which he probably sailed up the Mediterranean to Alexandria, and then made his way by Bassora to the Malabar coast, where it is certain that a colony of Syrian Christians, who regarded St. Thomas as their apostle, were settled from a very early period. Asser relates that he received, on one occasion, as a present from Alfred, a robe of silk, and as much incense as a strong man could carry; these precious commodities may have been obtained from the East.

But the interest which Alfred took in hearing of remote parts of the earth is most distinctly shown in the accounts

he has himself given us of the two voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan; the first to the North Seas, the second towards the east of the Baltic. These voyages were related to Alfred by the navigators themselves; and he has inserted what they told him in his Saxon translation of the Latin History of Orosius. It has been observed that Alfred "obtained from Ohthere and Wulfstan such information of the Baltic sea with the adjacent countries, as far exceeded that of professed geographers, either before or after his time, till the route of Ohthere was retraced in the year 1553 by the English navigator Chancellor, who was supposed the original discoverer of the northern passage to Russia."* Ohthere rounded the North Cape, and penetrated into the White Sea, from which he ascended a great river, which must have been the Dwina, on which Archangel now stands. Wulfstan navigated the Baltic as far as to the land of the Estum, the present Prussia. "This Eastland," says his narrative, "is very large, and there be a great many towns, and in every town there is a king; and there is a great quantity of honey and fish. The king and the richest men drink mares' milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead. There be very many battles between them. There is no ale brewed amid the Estum, but there is mead enough." Pytheas had remarked the same abundance of honey and use of mead, among the people of this coast, twelve centuries before.

It is one of Alfred's many great merits, and titles to perpetual and grateful remembrance, that he first called into action, and gave proof of what could be achieved by the natural right arm of England—her maritime strength. The year 887, the sixth of his reign, while he was engaged in that first struggle with the northern invaders which ended so disastrously, is marked as the year in which he fitted out his first few ships. Twenty years later, in his days of prosperity and power, he built a much larger fleet, and introduced certain important improvements in the form of the vessels, which, whether suggested by his own inventive sagacity, or borrowed, as it has been

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, i. 263.

conjectured they might have been, from the galleys then used in the Mediterranean, of which he had obtained models, he showed at least his usual active and inquisitive spirit in searching after, and his good sense in adopting. The Saxon Chronicler says that Alfred's ships were neither like those of the Danes nor those of the Frisians, but were made in a fashion which he himself thought would be more serviceable than that of either. They were twice as long as the *aescas*, as they were called, of the Northmen, and also higher than theirs ; in sailing, they were swifter and less unsteady. Some of them had sixty oars, some more. Yet, notwithstanding the statements of some later writers, we have no authentic account of any attempt by Alfred to create an English mercantile marine. One of his laws only shows that merchant ships sometimes arrived in England in those days ; and even this regulation regards not the cargoes of these foreign vessels, but the passengers. The only notice that has been found of the export of any English commodity in the time of Alfred, is the mention of some of the famous native breed of dogs having been sent as a present to Folk, archbishop of Rheims, in France.*

By far the most remarkable and significant event in the whole history of Anglo-Saxon commerce, is the law passed in the reign of King Athelstan, in the second quarter of the tenth century, by which it was enacted that every merchant who should have made three voyages over the sea with a ship and cargo of his own should have the rank of a thane or nobleman. The liberality of this law has usually been ascribed exclusively to the enlightened judgment of Athelstan ; but we are entitled to presume that it must have been also in some degree in accordance with the general feeling of the country ; for, not to mention that it must have been passed with the consent of the Wittenageinot, it is unlikely that so able and prudent as well as popular a monarch as Athelstan would have attempted in regard to such a matter to do violence to public opinion, without the acquiescence and

* Macpherson, i. 265.

support of which the measure could have had little efficacy or success. We may take this decree conferring the honours of nobility upon commerce, therefore, as testifying not only to the liberality and wisdom of Athelstan, but also to the estimation in which commerce had already come to be held among the English people. It may be regarded as a proof that the Anglo-Saxons had never entertained much of that prejudice against the pursuits of trade, which we find so strongly manifested during the middle ages, wherever the political and social institutions were moulded upon, and fully animated by, the spirit of the feudal system. But it is especially interesting in reference to the present subject, as an indication of the growing importance of English commerce and of the public sense of that importance. From this time English fleets and ships of war come to be frequently mentioned. Athelstan assisted his nephew, Louis IV. of France, in his contest with the Emperor Otho, by sending a fleet to the coast of Flanders, to ravage the emperor's territories in that quarter. This was done in conformity with a treaty of mutual defence, which is memorable as the first of the kind that had been entered into between the two kingdoms. Edgar's navy, and also that which Ethelred fitted out by a tax upon all the lands in the kingdom to repel the Danes, make a great figure in the history of the next half century. Some accounts make Edgar's fleet to have amounted to between three and four thousand ships—a statement resembling in its style of evident hyperbole the whole history the old monkish chroniclers have given us of this king, whose lavish benefactions to the church have secured him an extraordinary return of their gratitude and laudation. Ethelred's, again, is recorded to have been the most numerous naval armament that had yet been seen in England; so that it must have surpassed that of Edgar.

Even in the disastrous reign of Ethelred, we find indications of the continued progress of trade, both coasting and foreign. In certain laws enacted by Ethelred and his Witan, at Wantage, in Berkshire, it is declared, that every smaller boat arriving at Billingsgate (so old are that

landing-place and that name) should pay for toll or custom one halfpenny ; a larger boat with sails, one penny ; a keel, or what we should now call a hulk, four pennies ; a vessel with wood, one piece of wood ; a boat with fish coming to the bridge, one halfpenny, or one penny, according to her size. And from other passages of these laws, it appears that vessels were then wont to come to England from Rouen, with wine and large fish ; from Flanders, Ponthieu, Normandy, France, Hegge (an unknown place), Liege, and Nivell. Certain German merchants, called the Emperor's men, when they came with their ships, are declared to be worthy of good laws—that is, of being treated with favour ; but they were to pay their dues, and were not to forestall the market to the prejudice of the citizens. The dues to be paid by the Emperor's men, who were probably the representatives of some trading company, were two grey cloths and one brown one, ten pounds of pepper, five pairs of men's gloves, and two vessels or measures (called *cabillini colenni*, the meaning of which is unknown) of vinegar, at Christmas, and the same again at Easter. These were probably the articles of which their cargoes usually consisted. It is also worth notice, that a meeting was held in this reign of the wise men of England and Wales for regulating the intercourse, commercial and general, between the two kingdoms ; at which rates of compensation were fixed for slaves, cattle, &c., that might be stolen or injured, and it was agreed to appoint a standing tribunal, consisting of six English and six Welsh lawmen, or persons skilled in the law, to settle all disputes between individuals of the two nations.

Ainong many other interesting details derived from a volume of Saxon Dialogues, apparently intended for a school-book, which is preserved in the British Museum,* Mr. Turner has quoted the following passage, in which the Merchant, as one of the characters introduced, gives an account of his occupation and way of life : “ I say that I am useful to the king, and to caldermen, and to the rich, and to all people. I ascend my ship with my merchandize, and sail over the sealike places, and sell my

* Cotton MS. Tib. A. iii.

things, and buy dear things which are not produced in this land, and I bring them to you here with great danger over the sea ; and sometimes I suffer shipwreck, with the loss of all my things, scarcely escaping myself." He is then asked, " What do you bring to us ?" to which he answers, " Skins, silks, costly gems, and gold ; various garments, pigment, wine, oil, ivory, and orichalcus (perhaps brass) ; copper and tin, silver, glass, and such like." The principle of all commercial dealings is distinctly enough stated in the answer to the next question, — " Will you sell your things here as you bought them there ?" " I will not ; because what would my labour benefit me ? I will sell them here dearer than I bought them there, that I may get some profit to feed me, my wife, and children." The silks and other Oriental commodities here mentioned were usually, in all probability, obtained from Italy, or sometimes perhaps from Marseilles.

Foreign commodities can only be obtained by the exchange of other commodities produced at home. But the Anglo-Saxons had not much to export. Notwithstanding the flourishing state to which British agriculture had been raised by the Romans, there is no evidence or reason for believing that a single cargo of corn was ever exported from England during the whole of the period now under review. Although, however, there is no positive authority to establish the fact, Mr. Macpherson thinks there can be little doubt that the Flemings, the great manufacturers of fine woollen goods for the whole of Europe, carried away great quantities of English wool in this period, as we know for certain they did in the following ages. That there was an export trade in wool would seem to be indicated by the disproportionate price the fleece appears to have borne compared with the whole sheep, and also by the high price of wool.* Probably also the mines of the different metals yielded something for exportation. The Abbé Raynal has mentioned, but without quoting his authority, that among the traders of different nations who resorted to the fairs

* Macpherson, i. 288.

established in France by King Dagobert in the seventh century, were the Saxons with the tin and lead of England;* and Mr. Macpherson is of opinion that, as we know from Domesday Book that in the neighbourhood of Gloucester there were iron-works in the time of Edward the Confessor, which had probably been kept up since before the invasion of the Romans, iron, too, as well as lead and tin, may perhaps have been one of the few British exports during the Anglo-Saxon period. This writer thinks it also not impossible that mines of the precious metals may have been wrought at this time in England, and part of their produce exported, although the existence of such mines in the island is unnoticed by any historian since the beginning of the Roman dominion, with the exception of Bede.† It is certain that large sums in gold and silver were raised in the country on different occasions, and much coin or bullion repeatedly carried out of it; and it appears difficult to comprehend whence all this wealth could be obtained with so few manufactures and so little exportable produce of any kind. The early eminence of the Anglo-Saxons in the art of working gold and silver may be taken as affording another presumption that, whencesoever procured, there was no want of these metals in the island. "We have undoubted proof," says Mr. Macpherson, "that the English jewellers and workers of gold and silver were eminent in their professions, and that probably as early as the beginning of the seventh century. . . . So great was the demand for highly-finished trinkets of gold and silver, that the most capital artists of Germany resorted to England; and, moreover, the most precious specimens of foreign workmanship were imported by the merchants."‡ On the other hand, articles in gold and silver seem to have been the chief description of manufactured goods exported from England in this period.

Among the exports from Britain during part of this period are supposed to have been horses, because one of

* Hist. des Indes, ii. 4.

† Macpherson, i. 291.

‡ Macpherson, i. 290.

King Athelstan's laws prohibits their being carried out of the kingdom unless they were to be given as presents. Another part of the export trade, which was probably carried on to a much greater extent, was the trade in slaves. The mission of Augustine, which effected the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, was, it may be recollectec, the memorable result of the attention of Augustine's patron, Gregory, having been attracted by the appearance of a group of young Angles exposed for sale as slaves in the market-place of Rome. Afterwards several laws and ecclesiastical canons were passed prohibiting the sale of Christian slaves to Jews or Pagans. Finally it was enacted that no Christians, and no persons who had not committed some crime, should be sold out of the country. But William of Malmesbury, who wrote nearly a century after the Conquest, affirms that the practice of selling even their nearest relations had not been altogether abandoned by the people of Northumberland in his own memory. And in the contemporary biography of Wulfstan, who was Bishop of Worcester at the time of the Conquest, the following curious account is given :—“There is a sea-port town called Bristol, opposite to Ireland, into which its inhabitants make frequent voyages on account of trade. Wulfstan cured the people of this town of a most odious and inveterate custom, which they derived from their ancestors, of buying men and women in all parts of England, and exporting them to Ireland for the sake of gain. The young women they commonly got with child, and carried them to market in their pregnancy, that they might bring a better price. You might have seen with sorrow long ranks of young persons of both sexes, and of the greatest beauty, tied together with ropes, and daily exposed to sale ; nor were these men ashamed, O horrid wickedness ! to give up their nearest relations, nay, their own children, to slavery. Wulfstan, knowing the obstinacy of these people, sometimes stayed two months among them, preaching every Lord's Day, by which, in process of time, he made so great an impression upon their minds that they abandoned that wicked

trade, and set an example to all the rest of England to do the same."* But for this remarkable passage it would scarcely have been suspected that there ever was a time when the natives of England were regularly exported to be sold as slaves to the Irish. Their principal purchasers were probably the Danes, or Ostmen (that is, Eastern men), as they were called, who were at this time the dominant people in Ireland, and especially were masters of nearly the whole line of the coast opposite to Britain. They appear to have carried on a considerable commerce both with England and other countries. Chester, as well as Bristol, is particularly mentioned as one of the ports to which Irish ships were accustomed to resort about the time of the Norman Conquest. William of Malmesbury describes the inhabitants of Chester as depending in his day upon Ireland for a supply of the necessaries of life; and, in another place, he speaks of the great distress the Irish would suffer if they were deprived of their trade with England. Marten skins are mentioned in Domesday Book among the commodities brought by sea to Chester; and this appears, from other authorities, to have been one of the exports in ancient times from Ireland. Notices are also found of merchants from Ireland landing at Cambridge with cloths, and exposing their merchandise to sale.† Other English ports which are noticed as possessed of ships at the time of the Conquest, or immediately before that event, are Pevensey, Romney, Hythe, Folkstone, Dover, Sandwich, Southwark, and London. Bede speaks of merchants' ships sailing to Rome; and it appears that trading-vessels sometimes joined together, and went out armed for their mutual protection.‡

At all the above places, and at every other seaport in the kingdom, customs seem to have been exacted upon the arrival and departure of ships and goods, both by the king and by the lord, generally called the earl or *comes*, whose property or under whose protection the

* Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, ii. 258.

† See Turner, iii. 113.

‡ Ibid.

town was ; and trade was besides fettered by many restrictive regulations. At Chester, for instance, if a ship arrived or sailed without the king's leave, she was subject to a fine of forty shillings to the king and the earl for every one of her crew. If they came against the king's express prohibition, the ship, the men, and the cargo were forfeited to the king. Ships that came in with the king's permission might sell quietly what they brought, paying at their departure to the king and the earl four pennies for every last, or load. Those that brought marten skins, however, were bound to allow the king the pre-emption of them, and, for that purpose, to show them to an officer before any were disposed of, under a penalty of forty shillings. It is possible, however, that some of these oppressive regulations may have been first imposed by the Conqueror. At the time when the account in Domesday Book was drawn up, the port of Chester yielded to the crown a revenue of forty-five pounds, and three timbres (whatever quantity that may have been) of marten skins.

Of the internal trade of England during this period we know very little. That it was on a very diminutive scale might be inferred from the single fact, that no person was allowed to buy anything above the value of twenty pennies, except within a town, and in the presence of the chief magistrate, or of two or more witnesses. Such at least is the regulation found in the laws of King Hlothaere (or Lothair) of Kent, who reigned in the seventh century. Another enactment in the same collection is, that, "if any of the people of Kent buy anything in the city of London, he must have two or three honest men, or the king's port-reve (who was the chief magistrate of the city), present at the bargain." And a third of Hlothaere's laws is—"Let none exchange one thing for another except in the presence of the sheriff, the mass priest, the lord of the manor, or some other person of undoubted veracity. If they do otherwise they shall pay a fine of thirty shillings, besides forfeiting the goods so exchanged to the lord of the manor."

These regulations were probably intended in part to prevent fraud and disputes, and they might perhaps be in some measure serviceable for that purpose in an age when writing was not in common use; but there can be no doubt that they had principally in view the protection of the revenue of the king and the lord of the manor; to each of whom, it appears from Domesday Book, a certain proportion of the price of everything sold for more than twenty pennies was paid, the one-half by the buyer, and the other by the seller. The amount here specified would prevent the rule from affecting the ordinary purchases of the people in shops, to which it must be supposed they were permitted to resort for the necessaries of life without any of these annoying formalities. The transactions to which it applied would chiefly take place at the public markets or fairs, which appear to have been established in various parts of the country, and which in all the greater towns were probably held every week. Originally the Sunday seems to have been the usual market-day; but the repeated efforts of the church at length effected the general substitution of Saturday. Besides the weekly markets, however, there were probably others of a more important kind held at greater intervals. At many of the markets, besides the duties exacted upon all sales, a toll appears to have been demanded either from every individual frequenting the market, or at least from all who brought goods to dispose of. Most of these commercial usages of the Anglo-Saxons were inherited from their predecessors the Romans.

They had also, to a certain extent, the advantage of the facilities of communication between the different parts of the country, which had been created while it was in the occupation of that great people. The four great highways appear to have received Saxon names, and they were undoubtedly maintained in use during the whole of the Saxon period, as were also, it may be presumed, most of the other roads, or streets, as they were called, with which the country was intersected in all directions. And, besides the navigable rivers, it has

been supposed that artificial canals were cut in some places. A canal in Huntingdonshire, in particular, called Kingsdelf, is mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle under the year 963 ; and several of the boundary ramparts, erected primarily for the purposes of defence, appear to have had wide ditches, along which boats might be dragged.

The subject of the Money of the Anglo-Saxons is in some parts extremely perplexed and obscure. The different denominations of money of which mention is found, are, the pound, the mark, the mancus, the ora, the shilling, the thrimsa, the sceatta, the penny, the triens, the halfling, or halfpenny, the feorthling, or farthing, and the styca, or half-farthing. Of some of these, however, we know with certainty little more than the names.

The first difficulty that occurs is in regard to which of these kinds of money were actual coins, and which were merely nominal, or money of account. Upon this part of the subject, Mr. Ruding, from whom it has received the latest as well as the most elaborate investigation, comes, though not without hesitation, to the following conclusion : “ That the penny, halfpenny, farthing, and half-farthing were actual coins ; as was probably the triens, which divided the penny into three equal parts ; and that the mancus, the mark, the ora, the shilling, and the thrimsa, were only money of account ; or, that if the mancus was ever current among the Anglo-Saxons, it was a foreign coin, and was never imitated in their mints.”* There is no doubt that the pound was merely money of account. The sceatta seems to have been rather a general expression for a piece of money, than the denomination either of a coin or a particular sum. Others, however, have held that the sceatta, the mancus, the shilling, the thrimsa, and perhaps also the ora, were all coins.

The next question that arises relates to the metal of which each coin was made. Mr. Ruding is of opinion,

* Annals of the Coinage, i. 316. (Edit. of 1819.)

"that no evidence has yet been adduced to prove that the Anglo-Saxons struck any gold money; but that the balance of probability apparently inclines to the determination that no such money was issued from their mints."* By others the mancus is supposed to have been of gold; and Mr. Turner thinks that both gold and silver were used in exchanges in an uncoined state.† It is certain that mention is repeatedly made of payments in gold. It is agreed that the penny, the halfpenny, the farthing, and the triens (if that was a coin) were all of silver; and that the styca was of copper, or of that metal with an alloy. In fact, no Saxon coins have yet been discovered except some of those last mentioned. Of pennies and stycas some large hoards have been found within these few years. In April, 1817, a wooden box was turned up by a ploughman in a field near Dorking, in Surrey, which contained nearly seven hundred Saxon pennies, principally of the coinages of Ethelwulf, the son and successor of Egbert, and of Ethelbert, the father of Alfred, but partly also of those of preceding kings of Wessex, of Mercia, and of East-Anglia.‡ Eighty-three silver coins of King Ethelred, and two of his father, King Edgar, were found in 1820, by a peasant while digging a woody field in Bolstads Socked, in Sweden, and are now deposited in the Royal Cabinet of Antiquities at Stockholm.§ And in 1832, a brass vessel containing about eight thousand stycas, principally of the kings of Northumberland, was found at Hexham in that county. About five thousand of them were recovered from the persons into whose hands they had fallen; and a selection of about three hundred of them is now in the British Museum.||

* Annals of the Coinage, i. 316. (Edit. of 1819.)

† Hist. of Anglo-Saxons, ii. 470, 471

‡ See account of these coins, by Taylor Combe, Esq., in the *Archæologia*, vol. xix. (for 1821), p. 110.

§ Turner's *Anglo-Saxons*, ii. 480.

|| See account of these stycas, by John Adamson, Esq., with engravings of some hundreds of them, in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxv. (for 1834), pp. 229-310; and vol. xxvi. (for 1836), pp. 346-8.

But the most important, and unfortunately also the darkest question of all, is that of the determination of the value of these several coins or denominations of money. There has been the greatest doubt and difference of opinion both as to the absolute value or weight, and as to the relative value, of nearly every one of them. Almost the only thing which is perfectly certain is, that the pound was always understood to be a full pound of silver. It appears, however, to have been not the common troy pound, but another measure, long known in Germany by the name of the Cologne pound, and used in this country as the Tower or Mint weight down to the reign of Henry VII. It was three quarters of an ounce less than the pound troy, and was equal, therefore, to only eleven ounces and a quarter troy weight, that is, to 5400 grains.

Out of this amount of silver, throughout the whole Saxon period, the rule seems to have been to coin 240 silver pennies, each of which would therefore weigh $22\frac{1}{2}$ of our grains. Accordingly, this is about the average weight of the Saxon pennies that have been found. Our present pound no longer means a pound of silver of any denomination; but the old relation between the pound and the penny, it will be remarked, is still preserved—the value of the pound is still 240 pence. A few passages in old writers and documents have inclined some antiquaries to suspect that the Saxons had two kinds of pennies, a greater and a less; but, on the whole, this notion does not seem to be tenable. The name of the penny in Saxon is variously written,—peneg, penig, penine, pening, penincg, penning, and pending.

Supposing the value of the penny to have been thus ascertained, we have obtained that also of each of the inferior coins. The halfpenny, which, as existing specimens show, was also of silver, would weigh about $11\frac{1}{4}$ of our grains, and the feorthling, or farthing, about $5\frac{5}{8}$. But no Saxon farthings have been discovered, and we do not know whether the coin was of silver or copper. The styca was of copper much alloyed,—in other words, of bronze; but, as it was the half of the farthing, its precise value would be estimated at $2\frac{3}{8}$ grains of silver. All the stycas that have yet been found are from the mints of the

Northumbrian kings and the Archbishop of York; but the circulation of the coin appears to have been general throughout England. If there were such coins as the thriimsa and the triens, the former at least was probably of silver. The value of the thriimsa seems to have been three pennies, or $67\frac{1}{2}$ grains of silver; that of the triens, the third of a penny, or $7\frac{1}{2}$ grains of silver.

These conclusions, as we have intimated, are not unattended with some difficulties; but they seem, on the whole, to be tolerably well made out, and at any rate it would only embarrass the statement, without adding any information of the least interest or value for our present purpose, to enter upon a discussion of the doubts or objections that have been raised upon certain points.

One of the main hinges on which the investigation of the subject of the Saxon money turns is the question of the nature and value of the shilling.

The Norman shilling, like that of the present day, was the twentieth part of the pound, and consisted of twelve pence; and this is the scale according to which the payments in Domesday Book are commonly stated. The scill or seilling of the Saxons is the denomination of money most frequently mentioned in their laws and writings, and it appears to have been that in which sums were usually reckoned; yet no Saxon shilling has ever been found, and the different ancient accounts and computations in which it is mentioned seem to be only reconcileable upon the supposition that it was of fluctuating value. Both these facts go to support the conclusion that the shilling was not a coin, but only a denomination of money of account. At one time it appears to have contained five, and at another only four pennies; if there were not indeed two sorts of shillings circulating together of these different values.* When the shilling contained five pennies its value was the forty-eighth part of the pound, or $112\frac{1}{2}$ grains troy of silver; when it contained four pennies only, it was the sixtieth part of the pound, and its value was only 80 grains troy of silver. The principal evidence for there ever having been a shilling containing

* Mr. Ruding is inclined to think that this was the case. See his Annals of the Coinage, i. 310.

only four pennies is a law of Athelstan, in which 7200 shillings are distinctly stated to be equal to 120 pounds; in which case there must have been 60 shillings in each pound. But there is equally good evidence that five pennies was the value of the shilling both before and after the time of Athelstan; and it has therefore been supposed that the shilling was depreciated by that king, and afterwards restored to its ancient value. In the laws of Canute the shilling appears clearly to be reckoned the forty-eighth part of the pound; and Ælfric, the grammarian, who wrote in this age, expressly states that there were five pennies in the shilling.

If the mancus ever was a coin, Mr. Ruding is of opinion that it became latterly merely a denomination of money of account. The commonly received etymology of the word, from the Latin *manu cusum*, struck with the hand (though this etymology may be doubted), would seem to favour the notion that it had been a coin at one time; but, as we find the mancus of silver mentioned as well as the mancus of gold, it must be concluded that the name came to be afterwards used as that simply of a certain sum, for it is improbable that any coin was in use of so large a size as a silver mancus would have been. The value of the mancus is stated by Ælfric to have been thirty pennies, in the same passage in which he states five pennies to have made a shilling. The mancus, therefore, contained six Saxon shillings, or was of the value of 675 grains troy of silver, being rather more than is contained in seven of our present shillings. It is observable that a gold coin, sometimes called a mancus, in other cases known by other names, circulated during the middle ages in many countries both of Europe and the East, the weight of which was 56 grains troy, which would be just about the weight of gold equivalent to thirty Saxon pennies, on the supposition, which other considerations render probable, that the relative value of gold and silver was then as twelve to one. Of this weight were the mancuses or ducats of Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and Holland, the sultani of Constantinople, the sequins of Barbary, and the sheriffs of Egypt.

The mark used to be supposed the same with the mancus, but this opinion is now quite exploded. The mark appears to have been a Danish denomination of money, and to have been introduced into this country by the Danish settlers, the first mention of it being found in the articles of agreement between Alfred and Guthrun. Some of the notices would seem to imply that, at first, the mark was accounted equivalent in value to only a hundred Saxon pennies; but it certainly came eventually to be estimated at one hundred and sixty pennies, that is, at two-thirds of the pound. Two-thirds of a pound is still the legal value of a mark. The mark, therefore, may be set down as of the value of 3600 grains troy of silver. The mark has never been supposed to be a real coin, except by those who have taken it for the same with the mancus.

The ora was also a Danish denomination, and appears to have been the eighth part of the mark. Its value, therefore, would be twenty Saxon pennies, or 450 grains troy of silver. There appears also, however, to have been an ora which was valued at only sixteen pennies.

The amount of silver, 5400 troy grains, which made an Anglo-Saxon pound, is now coined into 2*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* sterling. The value, therefore, of each of the Saxon coins, according to the view that has now been taken, would be as stated in the following Table. (See p. 81.)

The Saxon coins are generally sufficiently rude in workmanship; and this circumstance has been used as an argument to prove that the Saxons brought the art of coining with them to Britain from Germany, and did not acquire it by imitation of the Roman models. The earliest Saxon coin that has been appropriated is one in silver (a penny apparently, though commonly called a sceatta) of Ethelbert, king of Kent, who reigned from 561 to 616, the patron of St. Augustine. As the coin does not exhibit the usual Christian symbol of the cross, it may be presumed to have been struck before the year 597, in which Ethelbert was baptized. According to Mr. Ruding's description, "it bears on the obverse the name of the monarch, and on the reverse a rude figure, which occurs on many of the sceattæ, and which is supposed to

					£2 16 3
The Pound.—Money of Account	•	equivalent to	5400 grains troy of silver, or	•	
The Mark,	•	•	ditto	•	3600
ditto	•	•	•	•	or
The Maneus,	•	•	ditto (probably).	•	675
ditto	•	•	•	•	or about 7 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
The Ora,	•	•	ditto	•	450
ditto	•	•	•	•	or
The Greater Shilling,	ditto	(probably).	•	112 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 8 $\frac{3}{4}$
The Smaller Shilling,	ditto	(probably).	•	90	1 2
The Thrimsa,	•	•	ditto (probably).	•	67 $\frac{1}{2}$
ditto	•	•	•	•	or
The Penny.—Silver Coin,	•	weighing	•	22 $\frac{1}{2}$, value in sterling money about	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
The Triens,	•	•	ditto (probably).	•	15
ditto	•	•	•	•	2
The Halfpenny,	•	•	ditto	•	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
ditto	•	•	•	•	•
The Farthing,	•	•	ditto (perhaps) • about	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
ditto	•	•	•	•	•
The Styca.—Copper Coin,	•	equivalent to about	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a Farthing.	$\frac{3}{4}$

be intended to represent a bird." But other coins that exist without names, or with names that cannot be deciphered, may be older than this. Besides the kings of the different states of the Heptarchy, and afterwards of all England, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York had mints and issued money in the Anglo-Saxon times. In addition to the name of the king or the archbishop, the coins usually contain that of the moneyer by whom they were struck, and from the time of Athelstan also that of the town where the mint was situated. The later kings appear to have usually had numerous moneyers, and mints in all the principal towns throughout the kingdom.*

Besides the coins of their own minting, several foreign coins appear to have circulated among the Anglo-Saxons, especially the byzantine gold solidi, commonly called byzantines, or byzants, each weighing seventy-three grains troy, and being of the value of forty Saxon pennies, or (at their estimation of the relative values of gold and silver) nine shillings and fourpence-halfpenny of our present money. Thus St. Dunstan is recorded to have purchased the estate of Hindon (now Hendon), in Middlesex, from King Edgar, for 200 gold byzantines, and then to have presented it to the monks of St. Peter in

* Complete lists of the moneyers and mints in each reign, as far as they can be recovered, are given in Ruding's elaborate and exact Annals of the Coinage, 2nd Edit. 5 vols. 8vo. and 1 4to. of Plates, Lond. 1819. On the subject of the Anglo-Saxon Coinage, the reader may also consult Bishop Fleetwood's Chronicon Preciosum, 2nd Edit. 8vo. Lond. 1745; the Introduction to Leake's Historical Account of English money from the Conquest, 2nd Edit. 8vo. Lond. 1745 (but the views of these earlier writers have been corrected in some important respects by the results of subsequent investigation); Pegge's Dissertations on some Anglo-Saxon Remains, 4to. Lond. 1756; Clarke's Connection of the Roman, Saxon, and English Coins, 4to. Lond. 1767 (both Pegge and Clarke endeavour to show that the Saxons coined gold); and Folkes's Tables of English Coins, published at the expense of the Society of Antiquaries, 4to. Lond. 1763 (in this work was announced the important discovery that the Saxon pound was the Old Tower or Cologne pound).

Westminster.* There were also silver byzantines, which, according to Camden, were valued at two shillings each. At an early period even some of the Roman imperial money might remain in use. "That gold and silver," Mr. Turner remarks, "had abounded in the island while it was possessed by the Romans and Britons, the coins that have been found at every period since, almost every year, sufficiently testify; and it was the frequency of these emerging to view which made treasure-trove an important part of our ancient laws, and which is mentioned by Alfred as one of the means of becoming wealthy."†

Slaves and cattle passed also as a sort of circulating medium during this period so generally that they are spoken of as living money. Cattle, the first wealth of mankind, were probably in most countries the first money; that is to say, commodities were valued at so many cattle, and cattle were commonly given in exchange for all other things. When metal money, therefore, was first introduced, it was looked upon not as a convenient representative of commodities or property of all kinds, but only as a substitute for cattle; some of the oldest coins have the figures of cattle stamped on them; and in some languages money was actually called cattle. Thus *pecus*, cattle, is the origin of the Latin *pecunia*, money, and of our English *pecuniary*. The same thing is very curiously shown by the history of another still existing term, the word *mulct*, meaning a fine or pecuniary penalty. *Mulet* is a translation of the Latin *mulcta*, or, as it is more properly written, *multa*, which was an ancient Roman law-term for a fine, but which the Roman lawyers and antiquaries themselves, as we learn from Aulus Gellius, admitted to have originally meant a sheep, or rather a ram. Varro asserted that it was a Samnite word, and that the Samnites, the descendants of the old Sabines, had used it in that sense within his own recollection. It is remarkable that the original word still survives, in its original signification, in the Celtic dialects of Ireland and Scotland, in

* Camden's Britannia, 399.

† Hist. Ang.-Sax. iii. 237.

the former of which a wether is to this day *molt*, and in the latter *mult*.* Hence, in fact, come the French *mouton*, and our English *mutton*. The Anglo-Saxons, it would appear, although they had metallic money, had not completely passed out of the state of only commencing civilization in which cattle serve the purposes of money. A certain value seems to have been affixed by the law to horses, cows, sheep, and slaves, at which they might be seized by a creditor in payment of a debt due to him; and it is supposed that all kinds of fines, or pecuniary penances, imposed either by the state or the church, might be discharged either in dead or living money. The church, however, which, to its honour, from the first opposed itself to slavery, and greatly contributed by its systematic discouragement and resistance to put down that evil, early refused to accept of slaves instead of money in the payment of penances.

In the parts of Britain not occupied by the Saxons, it may be doubted if during the present period any metallic money was coined. No coins either of Scotland or of Wales of this antiquity have ever been found. Considering the intercourse, however, that in the later part of the period subsisted between both of these countries and England, it is impossible to suppose that, although they may not have minted any money themselves, they could be unacquainted with its use. A few of the Saxon coins probably found their way both to the Welsh and Scotch, and supplied them with a scanty circulation. The Welsh laws, indeed, show that the denominations, at least, of money were familiarly known to that people; but they seem to show, also, by the anxious minuteness with which they fix the price of almost every article that could become the subject of commerce, that a common representative of value and medium of exchange was not yet in common use. These Welsh laws, for instance, in one section, lay down the prices of cats, of all different ages, and with a most elaborate discrimination of species and properties. This may be regarded as a rude attempt to

* Thoughts on the Origin and Descent of the Gael, by James Grant, Esq., of Corrimony, 8vo. Lond. 1828, p. 145.

provide a substitute for barter without a coinage ; but the system which it would aim at establishing is in reality anything rather than an improvement of simple, unregulated barter. The real price, or exchangeable value, of a commodity, depending as it does upon a variety of circumstances which are constantly in a state of fluctuation, is essentially a variable quantity, and we can no more fix it by a law than we can fix the wind. A law, therefore, attempting to fix it would only do injustice and mischief ; it would, in so far as it was operative, merely substitute a false and unfair price of commodities for their natural and proper price.

When the prices of commodities, however, are thus settled by the law, it may be presumed that the prices assigned are those generally borne by the commodities at the time ; and in this point of view the law becomes of historic value as a record of ancient prices. Thus, from one of the Saxon laws of King Ethelred we learn that in England the common prices of certain articles, about the end of the tenth century, were as follows :—

		£. s. d.
Of a Man, or slave	A pound . . . equivalent to	2 16 3 sterl.
Horse . . .	Thirty shillings	1 15 2
Mare or colt.	Twenty shillings	1 3 5
Ass or mule.	Twelve shillings	0 14 1
Ox . . .	Six shillings	0 7 0½
Cow . . .	Five shillings	0 5 6
Swine . . .	One shil. and 3 pennies	0 1 10½
Sheep . . .	One shilling	0 1 2
Goat . . .	Two pennies	0 0 5½

We are not to suppose, however, that these legal rates were always adhered to in actual sales and purchases. The prices of all commodities among the Saxons no doubt rose and fell as they do at present, and with much more suddenness and violence than now ; for, in that rude period, from the scarcity of capital, and the comparatively little communication between one place and another, supplies of all kinds were necessarily much more imperfectly distributed than they now are over both time and space ; and any deficiency that might, from any cause, occur, was left to press with its whole severity upon the particular moment and the local market, without the

greater abundance of other places or other seasons being admitted to relieve it. Comparative, though not absolute steadiness of prices, or at any rate a steady and calculable, in lieu of an irregular and jolting movement of prices, especially of those of the great necessities of subsistence, is, on the whole, the accompaniment of an advanced civilization, the general character and result of which, indeed, may be said to be to repress irregularities of all kinds, and to bring all social processes nearer and nearer to the equability of those of mechanics. Several of the articles enumerated in the above list we find mentioned elsewhere as bearing a variety of other prices. In one case, for instance, we find a slave purchased for half a pound ; in another, for an yre of gold (the amount of which is not known) ; in another, for three mancuses, or about a guinea ; in another, for five shillings and some pence.* In these purchases it is generally mentioned that, besides the price, the toll was paid. "The tolls mentioned in some of the contracts for slaves," observes Mr. Turner, "may be illustrated out of Domesday Book. In the burgh of Lewes it says that at every purchase and sale money was paid to the gerefa : for an ox, a farthing was collected ; for a man, four pennies." Slaves, of course, differed very considerably from one another in real value. On the other hand, the same sum at which a sheep is here rated at the end of the tenth century appears to have been also its legal price three hundred years before. At least, in the laws of Ina, king of the West Saxons, who reigned at the close of the seventh century, a sheep with its lamb is valued at a shilling. In another of Ina's laws, the fleece alone is valued at two pennies, that is, at two-fifths of the price of the entire sheep and lamb. This high price of wool, as has been mentioned above, is accounted for on the supposition that there was some foreign trade in that commodity in the Anglo-Saxon times. By a law of Edgar, in the latter half of the tenth century, the highest price which could be taken for a weigh of wool was fixed at half a pound of silver ; "be-

* See these instances collected by Mr. Turner, from Hickes and other authorities, in Hist. Ang.-Sax. iii. 90.

ing," observes Mr. Macpherson, "if the weigh contained then, as now, 182 pounds of wool, near three-fourths of a [Saxon] penny (equivalent to nearly twopence in modern money) for a pound; a price which, as far as we are enabled to compare it with the prices of other articles, may be thought high."*

Of the prices of articles, however, in the Anglo-Saxon times, with the exception of some articles of agricultural produce, we scarcely know anything. Money being then comparatively scarce, the prices of most commodities were of course much lower than they now are—that is to say, they might be purchased for a much smaller amount of money. But there is no uniform proportion between the prices of that period and those of the present day, some things being nominally dearer than they now are, as well as many others nominally cheaper. Books, for instance, were still scarcer than money; and accordingly their prices were then vastly higher than at present. It follows, that no correct estimate can be formed of the proportion generally between the value of money in those times and its value at present; for the calculation that might be true of some articles would not hold in regard to others.

* *Annals of Commerce*, i. 288.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO THE DEATH OF KING JOHN. A.D. 1066—1216.

THE Norman Conquest, by the closer connexion which it established between our island and the continent, must have laid the foundation for an ultimate extension of English commerce; but a revolution which so completely overturned the established order of things, and produced so much suffering to the body of the population, could not be favourable, in the first instance, or until after the lapse of a considerable space of time, either to the foreign trade of the country, or to the national industry in any of its other branches. For the first four reigns after the Conquest, accordingly, the notices that have come down to us on the subject of the national commerce are still comparatively few and unimportant.

When the Normans first came over, however, they found England a country possessed of considerable capital, or accumulated wealth, and also, as it would seem, of a flourishing foreign commerce, which had, no doubt, chiefly grown up in the long and, for the greater part, tranquil reign of the Confessor. William of Poictiers gives a glowing account of the quantities of gold and silver and other precious effects which the Conqueror carried with him on his first visit to Normandy, and of the admiration which these spoils excited both in the Normans themselves and in strangers from other parts of the continent by whom they were seen. He expressly testifies that merchants from distant countries were at this time wont to import to England articles of foreign manufacture that were unknown in Normandy. He mentions also in other passages the great wealth of the native or resident merchants both of London and Winchester. Exeter was another town distinguished for its opulence; and Ordericus Vitalis relates, that when it was attacked

by the Conqueror, in 1068, there were in the harbour a great number of foreign merchants and mariners, who were compelled by the citizens to assist them in their defence. These notices occur incidentally in the relation of political transactions or military events ; no chronicler has thought it worth his while to enumerate either the various points at which this foreign commerce was carried on, or the articles in the exchange of which it consisted. If our information were more complete, we should probably find that it was shared by various other towns besides those that have been mentioned. There is reason to believe that Hastings, Dover, Sandwich, and the other towns on the coast nearest to France, which afterwards came to be distinguished as the Cinque Ports, and also Lincoln, and York, and other places in the more northern parts of the kingdom, all at this time maintained some commercial intercourse with the continent—with Italy, and perhaps also with Spain, as well as with France and the north of Europe or Germany. An active trade, as noticed in the last Chapter, also seems to have existed between Ireland and both Bristol and Chester on the west coast.

The principal exports at this early period were probably the same that for many ages after constituted the staples of our trade with foreign countries, namely, the natural productions of the island—its tin and lead, its wool and hides, and sometimes perhaps also its beeves, and the other produce of the same description reared in its pastures and forests. We find a regular trade in these and other articles established at the most remote date to which it is possible to carry back the history of English commerce : and it may be safely presumed that they were the commodities for which the island was resorted to by foreign merchants from the earliest times. As for corn, it was probably at this date, as it long afterwards continued to be, sometimes an article of export, sometimes of import. The articles we have enumerated were, no doubt, those in the production of which the industry of the great body of the people was employed. The only manufacture for their skill in which the English were as

yet eminent, was the working in gold and silver ; and William of Poictiers states that the best German artists in that department found themselves encouraged to come and take up their residence in the country. From this, we may presume that the chief demand for their productions and those of the native artists of the same class was among the English themselves ; but, from the high repute of the English workmanship, some of the embroidered stuffs, of the vases, ornamented drinking-cups, and other similar articles fabricated here, would, no doubt, also be sent abroad. Considerable quantities of the precious metals must have been consumed in the manufacture of these articles ; and it is not unlikely that the supply was in great part obtained from Ireland, where it is agreed on all hands that, whencesoever it may have been obtained—whether from native mines, or from the ancient intercourse of the island with the East, or from the Northmen, enriched by the spoils of their piracy, who had conquered and occupied a great part of the island in the period immediately preceding that with which we are now engaged—there was formerly an extraordinary abundance of gold and silver, of the former especially.*

* “ It appears that there were greater stores of the precious metals in Ireland than could well be supposed. Large sums of gold and silver were frequently given for the ransom of men of rank taken in battle ; and duties or rents, paid in gold or silver, to ecclesiastical establishments, occur very often in the Irish annals. At the consecration of a church in the year 1157, Murha O’Lochlin, king of Ireland, gave a town, 150 cows, and 60 ounces of gold, to God and the clergy : a chief called O’Carrol gave also 60 ounces of gold ; and Tiernan O’Ruark’s wife gave as much—donations which would have been esteemed very great in that age in England or upon the continent. What superstition so liberally gave, some species of industry must have acquired ; and that was most probably the pasturage of cattle . . . unless we will suppose that the mines of Ireland, which, though unnoticed by any writer, seem to have been at some time very productive, were still capable of supplying the sums collected in the coffers of the chiefs and the clergy.”—*Macpherson’s Annals of Commerce*, vol. i. p. 334.

William of Malmesbury, it may be observed, seems to speak of the trade between England and Ireland as one which the former country could dispense with without any serious inconvenience, but upon which the latter was dependent for the necessaries of life. He tells us that upon one occasion, when the Irish monarch, Mureard (or Murtach) O'Brien, behaved somewhat haughtily towards Henry I., he was speedily humbled by the English king prohibiting all trade between the two countries ; " for how wretched," adds the historian, " would Ireland be if no goods were imported into it from England." Perhaps English agricultural produce was exchanged for Irish gold.

In the violent transference and waste of property, however, that followed the Conquest, and the long struggle the invaders had to sustain before they made good their footing in the country, the wealth, and commerce, and general industry of England must all have received a shock from which it was not possible that they could rapidly recover. The minds and the hands of men were necessarily called away from all peaceful pursuits, and engaged in labours which produced no wealth. Nor was the system of government and of society that was at last established favourable, even after its consolidation and settlement, to trade and industry. It was a system of oppression and severe exaction on the one hand, depriving the industrious citizen of the fruits of his exertions and of the motive to labour ; and, on the other hand, it was a system of which the animating principle was the encouragement of the martial spirit, to which that of trade and industry is as much opposed as creation is opposed to destruction.

Two charters were granted to the city of London by the Conqueror, and a third by Henry I. ; but it is remarkable, that not even in the last-mentioned, which is of considerable length, and confers numerous privileges, is there anything relating to the subject of commerce, with the exception of a clause, declaring that all the men of London and their goods should be exempted throughout England and also in the ports from all tolls and other

customs. There is no reference to the city itself as a great mart, or to either its shipping or its port. Even in the general charter granted by Henry I., on his accession, there is not a word in relation to commerce or merchants. It is stated, however, by William of Poictiers, that the Conqueror invited foreign merchants to the country by assurances of his protection.

The numerous ships in which the Conqueror brought over his troops—amounting, it is said, in all, to about 700 vessels of considerable size, besides more than three times that number of inferior dimensions—must have formed, for some time, a respectable royal navy. William of Poictiers informs us that the first care of the duke, after disembarking his men, was to erect defences for the protection of his ships; and most of them were, doubtless, preserved, and afterwards employed in war or commerce. It is the opinion of a late writer, that the numerous fleet thus brought over by the Conqueror, “when not engaged in ferrying himself and his armies to and from the continent, was probably employed in trading between his old and new territories and the adjacent coasts of France and Flanders, which were all now connected with the new masters of England.”* We find a naval force occasionally employed in the wars even of the first English kings after the Conquest. The Saxon Chronicle states that, when the Conqueror made his expedition against Scotland in 1072, he sent a fleet to attack that country by sea, at the same time that he invaded it in person at the head of his army. Good service was done for Rufus against his brother Robert by the privateers which he permitted his English subjects to fit out in the beginning of his reign. A fleet was also equipped by Henry I., to oppose the threatened invasion of Robert, on his accession, the greater part of which, however, deserted to the enemy. Provision, indeed, was made by the Conqueror for the defence of the kingdom, whenever it should become necessary, by a naval force, by means of the regulations which he established in re-

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, i. 307.

gard to the Cinque Ports—originally Hastings, Hythe, Romney, Dover, and Sandwich—each of which towns was bound, upon forty days' notice, to furnish and man a certain number of ships of war, in proportion probably to its estimated wealth or population. Other towns in different parts of the coast also appear to have held of the crown by the same kind of service.

One of the old Saxon laws revived or continued by the Conqueror, and the only one in the collection of enactments which passes under the name of his Charter having any reference to trade, is the prohibition against all purchases above a certain amount, except in the presence of witnesses. “No one shall buy,” it is declared, “either what is living or what is dead, to the value of four pennies, without four witnesses, either of the borough or of the village.”

About the year 1110, Henry I. established a colony of Flemings in the district of Ross, in Pembrokeshire. These foreigners had come over in the reign of the Conqueror, driven from their native country, it is said, by an inundation of the sea, and they had been settled, in the first instance, chiefly about Carlisle and the neighbouring ports, and, as it would seem, with a view merely to the service their hardihood and skill in war might be of in the defence of the northern frontier of the kingdom. But they were as dexterous in handling both the plough and the shuttle as the sword. Henry is said to have been induced to remove them to Wales, by finding that they and the English, with whom they were mixed, did not agree well together. In the district of which he put them in possession, and which he had taken from the Welsh, they maintained their ground against all the efforts of the hostile people by whom they were surrounded to dislodge them, and soon came to be regarded as the force to be mainly depended upon for keeping the Welsh in check. By these Flemings the manufacture of woollen cloths appears to have been first introduced into this country; and it is supposed that they soon came to be made for exportation as well as for home consumption. Giraldus Cambrensis describes the foreigners as “a people

excellently skilled both in the business of making cloth and in that of merchandize, and always ready with any labour or danger to seek for gain by sea or land.”* It is probable that they also introduced some improvements in agriculture ; and, altogether, the example of industry, activity, and superior acquirements set by this interesting colony—the last, as it has been remarked, of any consequence settled in any part of the island till the coming over of the French Protestant silk-weavers, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685—could not fail to be of high public benefit. Their language was very nearly the same with the English ; and the district in which they dwelt, it seems, used to be called Little England beyond Wales ; in fact, they made the whole county of Pembroke, though lying at the further extremity of Wales, an English county. Henry II. afterwards added to their numbers by permitting some of those of their countrymen who had served as mercenaries under Stephen to settle among them. It is said that the descendants of these Flemings may still be distinguished from their Welsh neighbours.

The Flemings were indebted, both for the welcome reception they met with in the first instance, and for the permanent settlement they obtained, to their martial more than to their commercial skill—to their being a people, as Giraldus expresses it, equally most ready, now at the plough—now at the sword.† The Jews, who came over in great numbers soon after the Conquest, were a people of altogether another stamp. Precluded by their religion from engaging in the wars of any of the European nations among whom they had settled, they had become mere traders, and were, indeed, men of peace in a more strict sense than any other class of persons in those days, the clergy themselves not excepted. Independently, therefore, of the odium to which their faith exposed them,

* *Itinerar. Camb.* i. ii. Giraldus adds, that they were admirably skilled in soothsaying, by the inspection of the entrails of beasts !

† *Nunc ad aratra, nunc ad arma, gens promptissima.*

their habits made them in a peculiar degree objects of hatred and contempt to the warlike population of England and the other countries in which they took up their residence. Yet almost wherever commerce had taken any root, there were they to be found, pursuing perseveringly under obloquy, danger, and the cruellest oppression, their peculiar trade. To draw down upon them still more of the popular suspicion and dislike in a rude and ignorant age, that trade was not any species of industry by which produce of any kind was visibly created ; it did not necessarily imply even the exertion of any peculiar powers or acquirements ; it was labour neither of the hand nor of the head. Yet it was, in truth, a trade as essential to the creation of wealth as any labour. The Jews were the capitalists of those times ; they were dealers in that other element, by a combination with which alone it is that labour itself can, in the creation of wealth, accomplish any extraordinary results. Even in that dark and turbulent age the inherent power of property was strikingly evinced in their case, by the protection which it long secured to them, notwithstanding all the hostility of the popular feeling, and the disregard of them by the law itself. It was early found necessary to support them in their rights over their debtors ; and, while affairs went on in their ordinary course, it does not appear that a Jew ever had any greater difficulty in recovering the money owing to him than a Christian. The law, indeed, seems to have considered the Jews as the property of the king ; and he oppressed and plundered them to any extent that he deemed prudent. But he did not usually allow them to be injured by others ; and perhaps, indeed, they were more secure under the royal protection than they would have been under that of the law. Some of the kings, William Rufus in particular, excited much popular clamour by favouring them, as it was alleged, too much. Their wealth enabled them, at different times, to purchase charters from the crown. For one which they obtained from King John, and which is styled a confirmation of their charters, they are recorded to have paid four thou-

sand marks ; and it refers to previous charters which they had received both from Henry I. and Henry II.*

There are traces of an intercourse having subsisted between these islands and the East from the remotest times. The mere derivation of the people of Europe from Asia most probably, of itself, had always kept up some connexion between the East and the West ; neither the Gothic nor the earlier Celtic colonists of Europe seem to have ever altogether forgotten their Oriental origin ; the memory of it lives in the oldest traditions alike of the Irish and of the Scandinavians. But even within the historic period we find a succession of different causes operating to keep up a connexion between Britain and the East. As long as the island was under the dominion of the Romans it was of course united by many ties, and by habits of regular intercourse, with all the other parts of the extended empire to which it belonged. Afterwards, in the Saxon times, the establishment of Christianity in the country contributed in various ways to maintain its connexion with the East. The Greek learning, and probably also some of the Greek arts, were introduced by Archbishop Theodore and other churchmen from Asia : at a later date we find Alfred despatching a mission to the Christians in India ; and not long afterwards we find pilgrimage to the Holy Land becoming a common practice. From this practice we may most properly date the commencement of our modern trade with the East ; it has ever since been a well established and regular intercourse. The pilgrims, from the first, very generally combined the characters of devotees and merchants. Then, towards the close of the eleventh century, commenced the crusades, which for nearly two hundred years kept, as it were, a broad highway open between Europe and Asia, along which multitudes of persons of all sorts were continually passing and repassing.

Some curious evidences of the extent to which eastern commodities now began to find their way to the remotest

* Madox, Hist. Excheq., p. 174.

extremities of Europe may be collected from the records of the times. One very remarkable notice occurs in the Registry of the Priory of St. Andrew's, in Scotland, in which it is related that Alexander I., when bestowing a certain endowment of land upon the church of that city, presented at the same time an Arabian horse which he was wont to ride, with his bridle, saddle, shield, and silver lance, a magnificent pall or horse-cloth, and other Turkish arms (*arma Turchensia*) of various descriptions. He caused the horse, arrayed in its splendid furniture, to be led up to the high altar of the church ; and the record adds that the Turkish armour, the shield, and the saddle were still preserved there, and shown to the people, who came from all parts of the country to behold them. Alexander reigned from 1107 till 1124 ; and this account is written in the reign of his brother and successor, David I.*

But the most precious gift which Europe obtained from the East within the present period was the knowledge of the art of rearing and managing the silk-worm. Cloth of silk had long been known in England and other European countries, to which it was brought in a manufactured state from Greece and other parts of the East. Afterwards the Saracens introduced the art of weaving silk into Spain. The silk-worm, however, was first brought from Greece in 1146, by Roger, the Norman king of Sicily, who, in an expedition which he led against Athens, Thebes, and Corinth, carried off a great number of silk-weavers from these cities, and settled them in his capital of Palermo. From them the Sicilians learned both how to weave the cloth and how to rear the worm ; and within twenty years from this time the silk fabrics of Sicily were celebrated over Europe. It is not till some centuries later that we have any accounts of the establishment of any branch of the manufacture in this country ; but from

* Extracts from the Register of St. Andrew's, printed in Pinkerton's Inquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the reign of Malcolm III., i. 464. The circumstance is also mentioned by Wynton, who is, however, a much later authority.

about this time we find silks becoming much more abundant in England as well as in the other countries of Europe than formerly—and they must now have been imported, probably from Spain, Sicily, and Italy, as well as from Asia, in considerable quantities.

It so happens that rather more information has come down to us respecting the commerce of Scotland than of England during the first half of the twelfth century. We have not only some very interesting notices respecting David I., who reigned from 1124 till 1153, from the historian Ailred, or Aldred, who was educated in Scotland along with Prince Henry, David's eldest son; but we have also a collection of the laws and customs of the burghs of Scotland, which professes to be as old as the reign of the same king, and is generally admitted to be, in the greater part, of that antiquity. Ailred celebrates the attention of David to foreign commerce. He exchanged, he says, the produce of Scotland for the wealth of other kingdoms, and made foreign merchandize abound in his harbours. Among the laws of the burghs attributed to him the following may be quoted as referring to trade with other countries:—By chap. 10, all goods imported by sea are ordered not to be sold before being landed, except salt and herrings; by chap. 18, foreign merchants are prohibited from buying wool, hides, or other goods, from any but burgesses; and by chap. 48, the lands of all persons trading to foreign countries are exempted from seizure for any claim whatever during their absence, unless they appeared to have withdrawn on purpose to evade justice. From this regulation it would appear that some of the Scottish merchants already traded themselves to foreign parts. Another of these burgh laws prohibits all persons except burgesses from buying wool for dyeing or making into cloth, and from cutting cloth for sale, except the owners of sheep, who might do with their own wool what they chose. The manufacture of woollen cloth had, therefore, been by this time introduced into Scotland. The art had probably been taught to the inhabitants of that country by settlers from England. William of Newburgh, writing about

twenty years after the death of David, says that the towns and burghs of Scotland were then chiefly occupied by English inhabitants. We know, too, that in the next reign numbers of Flemings left England and took refuge in Scotland. "We can trace the settlement of these industrious citizens," says Mr. Tytler, "during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in almost every part of Scotland; in Berwick, the great mart of our foreign commerce; in the various towns along the east coast; in St. Andrew's, Perth, Dumbarton, Ayr, Peebles, Lanark, Edinburgh; and in the districts of Renfrewshire, Clydesdale, and Annandale. There is ample evidence of their industrious progress in Fife, in Angus, in Aberdeenshire, and as far north as Inverness and Urquhart. It would even appear, from a record of the reign of David II., that the Flemings had procured from the Scottish monarchs a right to the protection and exercise of their own laws. It has been ingeniously conjectured that the story of Malcolm IV. having dispossessed the ancient inhabitants of Moray, and of his planting a new colony in their stead, may have originated in the settlement of the Flemings in that remote and rebellious district. The early domestic manufactures of our country, the woollen fabrics which are mentioned by the statutes of David, and the dyed and shorn cloths which appear in the charter of William the Lion to the burgh of Perth, must have been greatly improved by the superior dexterity and knowledge of the Flemings; and the constant commercial intercourse which they kept up with their own little states could not fail to be beneficial in imparting the knowledge and improvements of the continental nations into the remoter country where they had settled."* A manuscript in the Cottonian Library, the work of a contemporary writer, is quoted by Mr. Macpherson for the fact, that in the reign of David I., the Frith of Forth was frequently covered with boats manned by English, Scottish, and Belgie fishermen, who were attracted by the great abundance of fish (most probably herrings) in the

* History of Scotland, ii. 287.

neighbourhood of the island of May. Anderson speaks of the Netherlanders resorting to Scotland so early as about the year 836, for the purpose of buying salted fish of the Scotch fishermen;* but his authority for this statement is not known. Mr. Maepherson considers the passage in the Cottonian Manuscript to be "the very first authentic and positive notice of a fishery, having any claim to consideration as a commercial object, upon the North British coast." He also doubts if it be not "the earliest notice of English fishermen going so far from their own ports on a fishing voyage, if they were indeed subjects of England; for in the age of the writer here quoted the Scottish subjects on the south side of the Frith of Forth were called English."†

The long reign and able and successful government of Henry II. not only enabled the commerce of England to recover from the depression under which it had languished during the whole of the turbulent and miserable reign of his predecessor, but eventually raised it to an extent and importance which it had certainly never attained either since the Conquest or before it, at least since the departure of the Romans. The intercourse, in particular between this country and France, must immediately have been placed upon a new footing, and no doubt greatly augmented, both by the restoration of the old connexion with Normandy, and still more by Henry's acquisition through his marriage of the great Duchy of Aquitaine, which gave the English crown the dominion of all the French coast from Picardy to the Pyrenees. Some years afterwards the conquest of Ireland, and the establishment in that island of a numerous English population, must have also considerably extended the range, or at least added to the activity, of English commerce in that other direction.

In several contemporary writers we find notices of the commerce of London, and also of other English cities, in this reign. Henry II., in a charter which is without date, but which was probably granted soon after he came

* *Origin of Commerce*, i. 77. (Edit. of 1787.)

† *Annals of Commerce*, i. 325.

to the throne, confirmed to the citizens of London all the privileges which they enjoyed under his grandfather, with some others in addition, none of which, however, have any particular reference to the commerce of the city. The fullest and most curious account we have of London at this period is that given in the introduction to a Latin life of Becket by a monk of Canterbury, of Norman descent, named Williani Fitz-Stephen, or Stephanides, as he calls himself in Latin, which appears to have been written about 1174. He says that no city in the world sent out its wealth and merchandize to so great a distance ; but he has not recorded either the descriptions of goods that were thus exported or the countries to which they were sent. Among the articles, however, which were then brought to London by foreign merchants, he enumerates gold, spices, and frankincense, from Arabia ; precious stones from Egypt ; purple cloths from India ; palm-oil from Bagdad ; furs and ermines from Norway and Russia ; arms from Scythia ; and wines from France. The citizens he describes as distinguished above all others in England for the elegance of their manners and dress, and the magnificence of their tables. It was in this reign, it may be observed, that London first became decidedly, what Fitz-Stephen calls it, the capital of the kingdom of England (*regni Anglorum sedes*). Winchester, the ancient royal seat of the West Saxons, although it was the place where the early Norman kings kept their treasury, had begun to decline even before the Conquest, and had sustained such calamities in the civil wars of the time of Stephen that it was never afterwards in a condition to dispute the ascendancy of its rival on the Thames. At this time, according to Fitz-Stephen, and his account is confirmed by Peter of Blois, writing a few years earlier, there were, in the city and suburbs, thirteen large conventional churches and 126 parochial ones. Peter of Blois says, in an epistle to Pope Innocent II., that the population was only 40,000 ; but this is not absolutely inconsistent with the statement of Fitz-Stephen, that in the reign of Stephen there issued from the city, of fighting men, no fewer than 60,000 foot

and 20,000 horse, since the army assembled in the city, or raised under the orders of its authorities, might very possibly greatly exceed the number of the actual inhabitants. It is most probable, however, that there is an error in the numbers found in Fitz-Stephen's text as it has come down to us. He adds, that the dealers in the various sorts of commodities, and the labourers and artizans of every kind, were to be found every day stationed in their several distinct places throughout the city, and that a market was held every Friday in Smithfield for the sale of horses, cows, hogs, &c. At this time Ludgate, now far within Temple Bar, was the west end of London ; the space from thence to Westminster was a tract of fields and gardens : Moorfields was a large lake of water, into which ran several streams turning mills ; the rising grounds towards Pentonville and Islington were covered with corn and grass ; and a large district of country beyond was a forest, that had probably stood since the creation, in which the citizens hunted wild-boars and other game. According to Fitz-Stephen, the citizens of London were distinguished from those of other towns by the appellation of barons ; and Malmesbury, an author of the same age, also tells us that, from their superior opulence and the greatness of the city, they were considered as ranking with the chief people or nobility of the kingdom. "It is filled," he adds, "with merchandize brought by the merchants of all countries, but chiefly those of Germany ; and, in case of scarcity of corn in other parts of England, it is a granary where the article may be bought cheaper than anywhere else." It was in London that the Jews chiefly resided, and many of them were no doubt among its wealthiest citizens.

The following are some of the most remarkable particulars that are to be collected from contemporary authorities respecting other English cities at this period. Exeter, according to Malmesbury, was a magnificent city, filled with opulent citizens. Henry of Huntingdon states, that, in consequence of its being the principal port for the mineral productions of the adjacent country, it was so much resorted to by foreign merchants that everything

that could be desired might be purchased there in abundance. Bristol is mentioned by Malmesbury as having a great trade, not only with Ireland, but also with Norway and other foreign countries. Both Gloucester and Winchester are celebrated for the excellence of their wines made from the grapes of the country. For foreign wines, again, Chester would appear to have been one of the chief ports, if we may trust the testimony of a monk of that city named Lucian, whom Camden quotes. According to this authority, ships repaired to Chester in great numbers, not only from Ireland, but also from Gascony, Spain, and Germany, and supplied the inhabitants with all sorts of commodities ; "so that," adds Lucian, "being comforted by the favour of God in all things, we drink wine very plentifully ; for those countries have abundance of vineyards." Dunwich, on the coast of Suffolk, now reduced by the encroachments of the sea to an insignificant village, is described by William of Newburgh as a famous sea-port town, stored with various kinds of riches ; and in the reign of John this town is stated to have paid twice as much rent to the king as any other upon the neighbouring coast. Norwich is described in general terms by Malmesbury as famous for its commerce and the numbers of its population. Lynn is described by Newburgh as a city distinguished for commerce and abundance, the residence of many wealthy Jews, and resorted to by foreign vessels. Lincoln, Malmesbury speaks of as having become one of the most populous seats of home and foreign trade in England, principally in consequence of a canal of about seven miles in length, made by Henry I., from the Trent to the Witham, which enabled foreign vessels to come up to the city. Grimsby is noted by the Norwegian or Icelandic writers as an emporium resorted to by merchants from Norway, Scotland, Orkney, and the Western Islands. York is mentioned by Malmesbury as resorted to by vessels both from Germany and Ireland, though surely it lay very much out of the way of any trade with the latter country. Whitby, Hartlepool, and some other towns on the same part of the east coast, appear to have possessed shipping. Berwick, as already

noticed, was the most eminent of the Scottish towns for foreign commerce. It had many ships. Perth, however, was at this time, properly speaking, the capital of Scotland ; and Alexander Neckham, abbot of Cirencester, a Latin poet of this age, says that the whole kingdom was supported by the wealth of that city. Inverleith (now Leith), Striveling (now Stirling), and Aberdeen, are also mentioned in charters as places at which there was some shipping and trade, and where customs were collected.* Glasgow was as yet a mere village ; it was made a burgh, subject to the bishop, by William the Lion, in 1175 ; but in the charter there is no mention of a guild, of any mercantile privilege, or of any trade whatever, except the liberty of having a weekly market. Edinburgh, though it was probably made a burgh by David I., was of little note till the middle of the fifteenth century. In Ireland, Dublin, which Henry II. granted by a charter in 1172 to be inhabited by his men of Bristol, is spoken of by Newburgh as a noble city, which, it is added, somewhat hyperbolically, might be considered as almost the rival of London for its opulence and commerce.

There are two laws of Henry II. relating to commerce, that deserve to be mentioned. Henry I. had so far mitigated the old law or custom, which made all wrecks the property of the crown, as to have enacted, that, if any human being escaped alive out of the ship, it should be no wreck ; and his grandson still farther extended the operation of the humane principle thus introduced, by decreeing, that, if either man or beast should be found alive in any vessel wrecked upon the coasts of England, Poictou, Gascony, or the isle of Oleron, the property should be preserved for the owners, if claimed within three months. The other law is the last clause of the statute called the Assize of Arms, published in 1181 : it very emphatically commands the Justices in Eyre, in their progress through the counties, to enjoin upon all the

* See these and other facts collected, and the authorities cited, by the laborious and accurate Macpherson, Ann. of Com. i. 330—333.

lieges, as they love themselves and their property, neither to buy nor sell any ship for the purpose of its being carried out of England, and that no person should convey, or cause to be conveyed away, any mariner out of England. It has been inferred, from these regulations, that both English ships and English seamen were already held to be superior to those of other countries; but they can only be considered as showing that the naval force of the kingdom had now come to be looked upon as an important arm of its strength, and was the object of a watchful and jealous superintendence.

The only articles that are mentioned as imported into England from foreign countries in this period, are the spiceries, jewels, silks, furs, and other luxuries enumerated by Fitz-Stephen, of which there could not be any very extensive consumption; some woad for dyeing, and occasionally corn, which was at other times an article of export. The exports, on the other hand, appear to have been of much greater importance and value. Henry of Huntingdon enumerates, as being annually sent to Germany by the Rhine, great cargoes of flesh and of different kinds of fish (especially herrings and oysters), of milk, and, above all, of what he calls "most precious wool." He also mentions mines of copper, iron, tin, and lead as abundant; and it appears from other authorities that there was a large exportation both of lead and tin. The roofs of the principal churches, palaces, and castles, in all parts of Europe, are said to have been covered with English lead; and the exports of tin from mines belonging to the crown in Cornwall and Devonshire furnished at this time and for ages afterwards a considerable portion of the royal revenue. It is probable also that hides and skins and woollen cloths were exported, as well as wool. All this could not be paid for by the few articles of luxury above enumerated; and it may therefore be concluded that a large part of the annual returns derived by the country at this time from its foreign trade was received in the form of money or bullion. This supposition is confirmed by the account of Huntingdon, who expressly informs us that the Germans paid for the wool and pre-

visions they bought in silver ; on which account, he adds, that metal is even more plentiful in England than in Germany, and all the money of England is made of pure silver. The balance of trade, then, was what is commonly called in favour of England, unreasonably enough, as if nothing were wealth but gold and silver. The country at this time did not really become richer by exchanging its produce for money, than it would have done by taking foreign produce or manufactures in exchange for it. Nor, even if we should hold money to be the only true wealth, could it have accumulated in the country with more rapidity or to a greater amount under the one system than under the other ; for a country in a given social condition can only retain a certain quantity of money in circulation within it, and that quantity it always will obtain, if it is able to obtain anything else of equivalent value. Money is necessary, and profitable to a certain extent, just as shoes or hats are ; but beyond that extent, neither they nor it are either profitable or necessary—that is to say, something else for which the article could be exchanged would be more useful. The money anciently obtained by England through its foreign trade did not enrich the country, or even remain in it ; so much of it as was not required for the purposes of circulation was as sure to find its way abroad again, as the stone thrown up into the air is to return to the ground.

If the commerce of England had not struck far deeper root, and grown to far greater magnitude and strength, at the time of the death of Henry II. than at that of Henry I., somewhat more than half a century before, the reign of Richard would have been, in proportion to its length, nearly as ruinous to it as was the disorderly and distracted reign of Stephen. All the activity and resources of the country were now turned from trade and industry to the wasteful work of war, which was carried on, indeed, in a foreign and distant land, and therefore did not produce the confusion and desolation within the kingdom that would have resulted from a civil contest ; but, on the other hand, was, doubtless, on that account attended with a much larger expenditure both of money and of human

life. Yet even from Richard's warlike preparations, and the pecuniary burdens which his expedition in other ways brought upon his people, we may collect a few notices of interest in regard to the progress of the commerce, navigation, and wealth of the country. The fleet which carried out his troops to the Holy Land was probably by far the most magnificent that had ever as yet left the English shores, although some of those of former times may have consisted of a greater number of vessels. But the barks, amounting, it is said, to some thousands, in which the Conqueror brought over his army from Normandy, and the four hundred vessels in which Henry II. embarked his forces for the conquest of Ireland, not to speak of the more ancient navies of Edgar and Ethelred in the Saxon times, must have been craft of the smallest size, or what would now be merely called boats. Besides a crowd of vessels of this description—the number of which is not given—Richard's fleet, when it assembled in the harbour of Messina, is said to have consisted of thirteen large vessels, called busses or dromons, fifty-three armed galleys, and a hundred carrieks or transports. All these vessels were constructed both to row and to sail, the dromons having three sails, probably each on a separate mast, and both they and the galleys having, as it would appear, in general two tiers or banks of oars. "Modern vessels," says Vinisauf, "have greatly fallen off from the magnificence of ancient times, when the galleys carried three, four, five, and even six tiers of oars, whereas now they rarely exceed two tiers. The galleys anciently called *liburnæ* are long, slender, and low, with a beam of wood fortified with iron, commonly called a spur, projecting from the head, for piercing the sides of the enemy. There are also small galleys called galeons, which, being shorter and lighter, steer better, and are fitter for throwing fire."* The fire here alluded to is the famous Greek fire, the great instrument of destruction at this time, both in encounters at sea, and in assaults upon fortified places on shore. This expedition of Richard was the first in

* Translation in Macpherson, Ann. of Com. i. 352.

which an English fleet had accomplished so long and various a navigation ; and, under the conduct of so energetic a commander, it could not fail to give an impulse to the naval progress of the country, and to raise both the military skill and the seamanship of English sailors.

The kingdom had not yet recovered from the exhausting exertions it had made in fitting out this great fleet and army, when it was called upon to raise what was in those days an immense sum for the king's ransom. The agreement was, that before Richard's liberation, his jailor, the emperor, should be paid 100,000 marks of silver, besides 50,000 more afterwards—an amount of money then deemed so great, that a contemporary foreign chronicler, Otto de St. Blas, declines mentioning it, as he could not, he says, expect to be believed. It does not clearly appear how much of the 150,000 marks was paid in all ; but it is stated that 70,000 marks of silver, equal in weight to nearly 100,000*l.* of our money, were remitted to Germany before the king was set free. This money was only raised by the most severe and grievous exactions. It was not all obtained till three successive collections had been made. Four years before this, it may be noted, in the beginning of Richard's reign, the much poorer kingdom of Scotland had repurchased its independence at the cost of 10,000 marks.

A few laws for the regulation of trade are recorded to have been enacted by Richard after his return home. The same year in which he returned, a prohibition was issued against the exportation of corn, "that England," as it was expressed, "might not suffer from the want of its own abundance." The violation of this law is stated to have been punished in one instance with merciless severity : some vessels having been seized in the port of St. Valery, laden with English corn for the King of France, Richard burned both the vessels and the town (which belonged to that king), hanged the seamen, and also put to death some monks who had been concerned in the illegal transaction. He then, after all this wild devastation, divided the corn among the poor. In 1197, also, a law was passed for establishing a uniformity of weights and

measures, and for regulating the dyeing and sale of woollen cloths. The business of dyeing, except in black, it was enacted, should only be carried on in cities and boroughs, in which alone also any dyeing stuffs, except black, were allowed to be sold. It appears that the duties upon woad imported into London in 1195 and 1196 amounted to 96*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* “If London alone,” observes Macpherson, “imported woad to an extent that could bear such a payment (and it will afterwards appear that but a small part of the whole woad imported arrived in London), the woollen manufacture, to which it was apparently mostly confined, must have been somewhat considerable. But there is reason to believe that but few *fine* woollen goods were made in England, and that the Flemings, who were famous at this time for their superior skill in the woollen manufacture, as is evident from the testimony of several of the English historians of this age, continued for a series of ages to supply most of the western parts of Europe, and even some of the Mediterranean countries, with fine cloths, which the Italians called French cloths, either as reckoning Flanders a part of France (as, indeed, in feudal language it was), or because they received them from the ports of the south coast of that country.” Much of the wool used in Flanders, however, appears to have been obtained from England. In the history, indeed, which bears the name of Matthew of Westminster, it is said that all the nations of the world used at this time to be kept warm by the wool of England, which was made into cloth by the Flemish manufacturers. In the patent of incorporation of the guild of weavers in London by Henry II., granted in the thirty-first year of his reign, there is a prohibition against mixing Spanish with English wool in the making of cloth, from which it may be inferred that the wool of England was in this age of superior quality to that obtained from Spain.

From the commencement of his reign, John appears to have affected to favour the interests of the part of the community connected with trade, now daily rising into more importance, and to have courted their support

against the power of the nobility and the clergy. Immediately after his accession, he granted three charters to the citizens of London ; the first generally confirming all their ancient rights and privileges ; the second empowering them to remove all kidells, or wears for catching fish, from the rivers Thames and Medway, the navigation of which had been much impeded by these erections, set up by the keeper of the Tower and others ; and the third confirming to them the fee-farm of the sheriffwicks of London and Middlesex at the ancient rent, and also giving to them the election of the sheriffs. For these charters he received 3000*l.* He also, probably at the same time, addressed letters to the most important commercial towns throughout the kingdom, promising that foreign merchants of every country should have safe conduct for themselves and their merchandize in coming into and going out of England, agreeably to the due right and usual customs, and should meet with the same treatment in England that the English merchants met with in their countries.* The places to which these letters were sent were the towns of London, Winchester, Southampton, Lynn, the Cinque Ports, and the counties of Sussex, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, Dorset, Somerset, Hants, Hertford, Essex, Devon, and Cornwall ; " whence it appears," observes Macpherson, " that the south coast, and the east coast only as far as Norfolk, were esteemed the whole, or at least the chief, of the commercial part of the country." It is certain, however, that several towns beyond these limits had already risen to considerable commercial importance. In a list of towns which in the year 1205 paid the tax called the quinzième, or fifteenth, which appears to have been a species of excise or tallage exacted from merchants, we find enumerated the following places in the northern part of the kingdom :—Newcastle in Northumberland ; Yarum, Cotham, Whitby, Scarborough, Headon, Hull, York, and Selby, in Yorkshire ; and Lincoln, Barton, Ymmingham, Grimsby, and

* Maitland's Hist. of London, i. 73—75. Hakluyt's Voyages, i. 129.

Boston, in Lincolnshire. The other towns in the list are Lynn, Yarmouth, and Norwich, in Norfolk; Dunwich, Orford, and Ipswich, in Suffolk; Colchester in Essex; Sandwich and Dover in Kent; Rye, Winchelsea, Pevensey, Seaford, and Shoreham, in Sussex; Southampton in Hampshire; Exmouth and Dartmouth in Devonshire; Esse (now Saltash) and Fowey, in Cornwall; and London. It will be observed, however, that these are all coast towns, or places having a river communication with the sea; and it surely cannot be supposed that there were not at this time some trading towns in the interior of the country. Either the quinzième was not a duty payable, as has been asserted, by "all persons who made a business of buying and selling, however trifling their dealings might be,"* or this is not a complete list of the places from which it was collected. Besides, not a single place on the western coast of the kingdom is mentioned, not even Bristol or Chester. We should be disposed to conjecture that the quinzième was only an impost upon foreign commerce, and even perhaps only upon some particular branch or branches of that. This supposition would make somewhat more intelligible the proportions of the whole amount collected which are set down as received from particular towns. It appears that the whole tax at this time yielded about 5000*l.* per annum; while of this total Lynn paid 65*l.*, Southampton 712*l.*, Boston 780*l.*, and London only 836*l.* It cannot for a moment be believed that in their general mercantile wealth London and Boston stood in this relation to each other. To add to the perplexity, we find that three years after this time the merchants of London purchased from the king an entire exemption from paying the quinzième for the small sum of 200 marks, that is to say, for less than a sixth part of the amount of the tax for one year. We must, in these circumstances, suppose the exemption to have been accorded as a mark of royal favour to the city, and the 200 marks to have been paid merely as an acknowledgment. Newcastle is the only other town

* Macpherson, Ann. of Com. i. 371:

the amount paid by which is mentioned ; it is set down as paying 158*l.*, and must therefore have already grown to considerable consequence, although only founded little more than a century before this time. Hull also appears for the first time as a place of trade only in the close of the last reign.

That several of the Scotch burghs were at this period possessed of very considerable opulence is testified by their having, in 1209, contributed 6000 marks of the 15,000 which William the Lion bound himself to pay to John by the treaty of Berwick. In this age Mr. Macpherson calculates that 6000 marks would have purchased in Scotland about 240,000 bolls of oats, or 60,000 bolls of wheat. Among other countries, a trade with Norway appears to have been carried on by the Scotch in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Among the articles which are mentioned in the monastic chartularies of the country as paying tithe at this time are wool, corn, butter, cheese, cattle, fish, and flax. From the occurrence of the last article it may be inferred that some linen was already made in Scotland.

It was in the reign of John that their first great naval victory was gained by the English, at the battle of Damme, or of the Sluys, as it is sometimes called, fought in 1213. As yet, however, the country possessed nothing that could properly be called a navy. The royal navy usually consisted merely of merchant-ships collected from all the ports of the kingdom, each of which, as we have seen, was bound, when required by the king, to furnish him with a certain number. In pressing emergencies, indeed, the king seized upon the whole mercantile shipping of the kingdom, or as much of it as he required ; "so that in those times," as the historian of commerce observes, "the owners could never call their vessels their own." "A striking illustration," it is added, "of the king's claim of right to the services of all merchant-ships appears in a letter written by Edward II. to the king of Norway, upon the detention of three English vessels, which he concludes by saying, that he cannot quietly put up with the vessels belonging to his kingdom, *which ought at all times to be*

ready for his service, being detained in foreign countries.”* John appears to have possessed merely a few galleys of his own.

In this reign we find the earliest mention of what may be called *letters of credit*, the first form, it may be supposed, of *bills of exchange*, the introduction and general employment of which very soon followed. In a document printed in the Foedera, John, under date of 25th August, 1199, at Rouen, engages to repay in four instalments, in the course of two years, a sum of 2125 marks, which had been advanced by a company of merchants of Placentia to the bishops of Anjou and Bangor on the faith of the letters of King Richard. Afterwards John himself repeatedly raised money by such letters, addressed to all merchants, whereby he bound himself to repay the sums advanced to his agents to the amount named, at such time as should be agreed upon, to any person presenting his letter, together with the acknowledgment of his agents for the sum received by them. Mr. Macpherson is of opinion that, as there is no mention of interest in any of those letters, it must have been discounted when the money was advanced. It is remarkable that, although at this time, in England, no Christian was permitted by law to take interest, or usury as it was called, even at the lowest rate, upon money lent, the Jews in this respect lay under no restriction whatever. The interest which they actually received, accordingly, was sometimes enormous. In the large profits, however, which they thus made the crown largely shared, by the power of arbitrarily fining them, which it constantly exercised. William of Newburgh frankly speaks of them as well known to be the royal usurers; in other words, their usury was a mode of suction, by which an additional portion of the property of the subject was drawn into the royal treasury: and this sufficiently accounts for the manner in which they were tolerated and protected in the monopoly of the trade of money-lending.

Very few direct notices of the state of trade in this

* Macpherson's Ann. of Com. i. 379.

reign have come down to us. Licences are recorded to have been granted to the merchants of various foreign countries to bring their goods to England, on due payment of the *quinzième*, which would thus appear to have been a customs duty, payable probably both on the import and export of commodities. The Flemings were the chief foreign traders that resorted to the country, and next to them, apparently, the French. In 1213 the duties paid on woad imported from foreign countries amounted to nearly 600*l.*; of which the ports in Yorkshire paid 98*l.*; those in Lincoln, 47*l.*; those in Norfolk and Suffolk, 53*l.*; those in Essex, 4*l.*; those in Kent and Sussex (exclusive of Dover), 103*l.*; Southampton, 72*l.*; and other places, not named, 214*l.* The woad, it may be presumed, was almost wholly used in dyeing cloths; but much cloth would also be both exported and worn at home without being dyed.

The freedom of commerce was sought to be secured by one of the clauses of the Great Charter (the forty-first), which declared that all merchants should have safety and security in going out of, and coming into England, and also in staying and travelling in the kingdom, whether by land or by water, without any grievous impositions, and according to the old and upright customs, except in time of war, when, if any merchants belonging to the hostile country should be found in the land, they should, at the commencement of the war, be attached, without injury of their persons or property, until it should be known how the English merchants who happened to be in the hostile country were treated there; if they were uninjured, the foreign merchants should be equally safe in England. This was as reasonable and even liberal a regulation as could have been desired on the subject. By other clauses, it was declared, that the debts of a minor should bear no interest during his minority, even if they should be owing to a Jew; that London and other cities and towns should enjoy their ancient privileges; that no fine should be imposed upon a merchant to the destruction of his merchandize; and that there should be a uniformity of weights and measures throughout the kingdom.

The only coined money of this period, as far as is certainly known, was the silver penny, which, as at present, was the twelfth part of a shilling ; the shilling being also, as it has ever since been, the twentieth part of a pound. The pound, however, was still a full pound of silver, according to the ancient Saxon or German standard of eleven ounces and a quarter troy, or 5400 grains to the pound. The same amount of silver is now coined, as explained in the preceding chapter, into 2*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* sterling ; and that, therefore, was the amount of money of the present denominations in the early Norman pound. The shilling, consequently, being the twentieth part of this, was equivalent to 2*s.* 9*3d.* of our present money ; and the penny, being the twelfth part of the shilling, or the 240th part of the pound, was still of the same value as in the Saxon times, and contained an amount of silver equal to a trifle more than what might be purchased by 2*3d.* of our money. But both the pound and the shilling were only money of account ; there were no coins of these denominations. It is doubtful, also, if there were any coins of inferior value to the silver penny ; no specimens of any such have been discovered. Both halfpence and farthings, however, are mentioned in the writings of the time ; and a coinage of round halfpennies by Henry I. is expressly recorded by Florence of Worcester, Simeon of Durham, and Hoveden. It has been supposed that the people before, and also perhaps after this, used to make halfpence and farthings for themselves, by breaking the penny into halves and quarters, which, it has been said, they were more easily enabled to do from the coin having on one side of it a cross very deeply indented. Leake, however, has remarked that “ the story of the cross being made double, or so deeply impressed, for the conveniency of breaking the penny into halves and quarters, is disproved by the coins now extant, whereon the crosses generally terminate at the inner circle, and, instead of being impressed, are embossed, which prevents their being broken equally.”* It is most

* Historical Account of English Money (2nd edit.), p. 38.

probable, perhaps, that both halfpence and farthings were actually coined, though none have come down to us.

Other denominations of money, however, than the above are also mentioned. In the early part of the period, and especially in the reign of the Conqueror, the Saxon mode of reckoning appears to have remained in general use. "In his laws," says Ruding, "the fines are regulated by pounds, oras, marks, shillings, and pence. The shillings are sometimes expressly stated to be English shillings of four pennies each. But in Domesday Book various other coins or denominations of money are to be found, such as the mite, farthing, halfpenny, mark of gold and silver, ounce of gold, and marsum. There seems also to have been current a coin of the value of half a farthing, which was probably the same as the mite above mentioned." The values of the Saxon coins here enumerated have been stated in the last chapter. The mark, it may be added, long remained a common denomination, and was at all times reckoned two-thirds of the pound. Some foreign coins, especially byzantines, which were of gold, are also supposed to have been still in use, as in the Saxon times.

The coins of the earlier Norman kings are of great rarity. Those issued by the Conqueror "were made," Ruding thinks, "to resemble those of Harold in weight and fineness, and some of them in type," in conformity with the policy upon which William at first acted, of affecting to be the regular successor of the Saxon kings. The coins of the two Williams can scarcely be distinguished, the numerals being for the most part absent. The same is the case with those of the two Henrys. Royal mints were still established in all the principal towns; and the name of the place where it was struck continues to be commonly found on the coin. In the lawless times of Stephen all the bishops and greater barons are said to have very generally coined and issued money of their own; every castle had its mint; and the money thus thrown into circulation is alleged to have been so debased that, in ten shillings, not the value of

one in silver was to be found. Stephen himself is also charged with having, in his necessities, resorted to the expedient of diminishing the weight of the penny. When Henry II. came to the throne, however, he put down all this base money; and none of the baronial coins of Stephen's reign are now known to exist, with the exception of a few bearing the names of his son Eustace, and of his brother, the Bishop of Winchester, which were probably issued by the royal licence.

Henry I., on his accession, abolished the tax of monyage, which had been introduced either by the Conqueror or his son Rufus; and he afterwards effected a reform of the coinage, which had been greatly corrupted by the frauds of the moneyers. Henry II. also called in all the old coins in circulation in the year 1180. No coins are known to be in existence either of Richard I. or John, as kings of England, although there are some of the former as Earl of Poictou and as Duke of Aquitaine, and of the latter as lord of Ireland.

An English penny of Richard's is given in various collections of plates of coins, but is admitted to be a forgery. Mr. Ruding, speaking of it and another of John, says—"These two pennies are now well known to be the fabrication of a late dealer in coins, who pretended to have discovered them amongst some which were found upon Bramham Moor in Yorkshire. He sold one of them for thirty guineas; the other remained in his possession, and was disposed of with the rest of his collection, after his death." The man's name was White.*

The earliest Scotch coins that have been discovered are some of Alexander I., who began his reign in 1107. The Scotch money appears to have, at this period, entirely corresponded with the English; and, indeed, the circulation of Scotland probably consisted in great part of English coins.

In regard to the real or efficient value of the money of those days, as compared with that of our present money,

* See Ruding's Ann. of the Coinage, ii. 35 and 50, and v. 98 and 262.

it is, as we have already had occasion to remark, impossible to make any statement which shall be universally applicable. The question of the value of money at any given period is merely a question of the price of a particular commodity—namely, the metal of which the money is made. But we have no means of estimating with precision the price of any commodity whatever, in the scientific sense of that term. All that we can do is to state it relatively to the price of some other commodity. This is all that we really do when we state the money-price of anything. That is only a statement of the relation between the price of the article in question and the price of the other article called money. It is no expression either of the general price of either, or of the relation of the price of either to that of any other article whatever. Commodities of all kinds, from causes sufficiently obvious, are constantly changing their relative positions in regard to price; and, therefore, the relation between the prices of any two of them can be no permanent index of the relation between the prices of any two others. In other words, the money-price of any one article at a particular time will give us no certain information as to the money-price either of all other articles, or of any other article.

Although, indeed, no precise estimate can be arrived at of the general value of money in former times as compared with its present value, many important conclusions in regard to the state of society, and the command possessed by the several classes of the population over the necessaries and comforts of life, may be drawn from the notices that have been preserved of the money-prices of commodities and labour at different periods. But the only point which properly belongs to our present subject is that of the relative values of gold and silver in the period we have been reviewing. The relation between the values of these two metals has fluctuated considerably in different ages. In ancient Rome, about the commencement of our era, it seems to have been usually as one to ten. About the fourth century, however, silver had become so much more plentiful, or gold so much

scarcer, that fourteen pounds eight ounces of the former were exchanged for a pound of the latter. In England, in the Saxon times, the legal proportion appears to have been as one to twelve. After the Conquest, however, gold became cheaper; and, about the middle of the twelfth century, one pound of it was exchanged for nine pounds of silver. In the beginning of the thirteenth century we find the value of silver rated to that of gold in the proportion of ten to one. At present the proportion is about as fourteen to one.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HENRY III. TO THE END OF THE
REIGN OF RICHARD II. A.D. 1216—1399.

THE history of English commerce during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is in great part the record of a course of legislative attempts to resist or annul the laws of nature, such as probably never was outdone in any other country. A full detail would serve no useful purpose; but a few samples will be found both curious and instructive.

A term which makes a great figure in the commercial regulations of this period is that of the Staple. The word, in its primary acceptation, appears to have meant a particular port or other place to which certain commodities were obliged to be brought to be weighed or measured for the payment of the customs, before they could be sold, or in some cases exported or imported. Here the king's staple was said to be established. The articles of English produce upon which customs were anciently paid were wool, sheep-skins (or woolfels), and leather; and these were accordingly denominated the staples or staple goods of the kingdom. The persons who exported these goods were called the Merchants of the Staple: they were incorporated, or at least recognized as forming a society with certain privileges, in the reign of Edward II., if not earlier. Hakluyt has printed a charter granted by Edward II., the 20th of May, 1313, to the mayor and council of the merchants of the staple, in which he ordains that all merchants, whether natives or foreigners, buying wool and woolfels in his dominions for exportation, should, instead of carrying them for sale, as they had been wont to do, to several places in Brabant, Flanders, and Artois, carry them in future only to one certain staple in one of those countries, to be appointed by the said mayor and council. It appears that,

upon this, Antwerp was made the staple. But, although the power of naming the place, and also of changing it, was thus conferred upon the society, this part of the charter seems to have been very soon disregarded. In subsequent times the interferences of the king and the legislature with regard to the staple were incessant. In 1326 it was, by the royal order, removed altogether from the continent, and fixed at certain places within the kingdom. Cardiff, in Wales, a town belonging to Hugh Despenser, is the only one of these new English staples the name of which has been preserved. It may be noted, also, that tin is now mentioned as one of the staple commodities. In 1328 (by the statute 2 Edw. III. c. 9) it was enacted, "that the staples beyond the sea and on this side, ordained by kings in times past, and the pains thereupon provided, shall cease, and that all merchant strangers and privy (that is, foreigners and natives) may go and come with their merchandizes into England, after the tenor of the Great Charter." In 1332, however, we find the king ordaining, in the face of this act, that staples should be held in various places within the kingdom. Acts of parliament, indeed, on all kinds of subjects were as yet accustomed to be regarded by all degrees of people as little more than a sort of moral declarations or preachments on the part of the legislature—expressions of its sentiments—but scarcely as laws which were compulsory like the older laws of the kingdom. Most of them were habitually broken, until they had been repeated over and over again; and this repetition, rather than the exaction of the penalty, appears to have been the recognized mode of enforcing or establishing the law. In many cases, indeed, such a way of viewing the statute was justified by the principle on which it was evidently passed; it was often manifestly, if not avowedly, intended by its authors themselves as only a tentative or experimental enactment, the ultimate enforcement of which was to depend upon the manner in which it was found to work. The act of parliament was frequently entitled, not a statute, but an ordinance; and in that case it seems to have been merely proposed as an interim regulation,

which was not to become a permanent law until some trial should have been had of it, and such amendments made in it as were found by experience to be necessary.* In other cases, again, and those of no rare occurrence, the law was of such a nature that it could not be carried into execution ; it was an attempt to accomplish what was impossible. These considerations may account for the numerous instances in which our old laws are merely confirmations, or in other words, repetitions of some preceding law, and also for the extraordinary multiplication which we find of fluctuating or contradictory laws. Of this latter description, those relating to the staple afford an eminent example. In 1334, all the lately established staples were again abolished by the king in a parliament held at York. In 1341, the staple was re-established by a royal act at Bruges, in Flanders. In 1348, again, after the capture of Calais, that town was made the staple for tin, lead, feathers, English-made woollen cloths and worsted stuffs, for seven years. All the former inhabitants of Calais, with the exception, it is said, of one priest and two lawyers, had been removed, and an English colony, of which thirty-six merchants from London were the principal members, had been settled in their room. In 1353, by the statute called the Ordinance of the Staples (27 Edw. III. st. 2, c. 1), the staple for wool, leather, woolfels, and lead, was once more removed from the continent by act of parliament, and ordered to be held for ever in the following places, and no others—namely, for England, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, York, Lincoln, Norwich, Westminster, Canterbury, Chichester, Exeter, and Bristol ; for Wales, at Carmarthen ; and for Ireland, at Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Drogheda. The “for ever” of this statute remained in force for ten years, and no longer. From the preamble of the statute 43 Edw. III., it appears that it had been ordained, for the profit of the realm, and ease of the merchants of England, that the staple of wools, woolfels, and leather, should be holden at Calais ; and that there accordingly it

* See on this subject Hallam's Middle Ages, iii. 72—75.

had been holden since the 1st of March, 1363. By this last mentioned act, however, passed in 1369, it was again, in consequence of the renewal of the war with France, fixed at certain places within the kingdom—being for Ireland and Wales the same that have been just mentioned, but with the substitution, in the case of England, of Hull, Boston, Yarmouth, and Queenburgh, for Canterbury, York, Lincoln, and Norwich. In 1376 nevertheless, on the complaint of the inhabitants of Calais, that their city was declining, the staple was restored to that place; and it was now made to comprehend, not only the ancient commodities of wool, woolsels, and leather, and those more recently added of lead, tin, worsted stuffs, and feathers, but also cheese, butter, honey, tallow, poultry (or skins of all kinds), and what are called “*gaulæ*,” which have been supposed to mean osiers for making baskets; these different articles probably comprehending all the ordinary exports from the kingdom. But this restriction of the whole export trade to one market was soon relaxed. In 1378 (by the 2nd Rich. II. stat. 1, c. 3), it was enacted, that all merchants of Genoa, Venice, Catalonia, Arragon, and other countries toward the West, that would bring their vessels to Southampton, or elsewhere within the realm, might there freely sell their goods, and also recharge their vessels with wools, and the other merchandises of the staple, on paying the same customs or duties that would have been payable at Calais; and in 1382 (by the 5th Rich. II. stat. 2, c. 2), all merchants, whether foreigners or natives, were permitted to carry wool, leather, and woolsels, to any country whatever, except France, on payment of the Calais duties beforehand. In 1384, we find the wool-staple altogether removed from Calais, and established at Middleburgh. In 1388 (by the statute 12 Rich. II. c. 16), it was ordered to be fixed once more at Calais; but in 1390 (by the 14th Rich. II. c. 1), it was brought back to the same English towns in which it had been fixed in 1353. The very next year, however, it was enacted that, instead of these towns, the staple should be held at such others upon the coast as the

lords of the council should direct; and it would even appear (from the 15th Rich. II. c. 8), that, at least for a part of the year, the staple of wool and also of tin was still at Calais. “Staples and restraints in England, and a second staple and other restraints at the same time on the continent!” exclaims the historian of our commerce, in noting this fact: “the condition of the merchants who were obliged to deal in staple goods was truly pitiable in those days of perpetual changes.”* It is not quite clear, however, that the English staples were still continued; it is perhaps more probable that they had been abolished when the staple was restored to Calais. However this may be, it appears from the statute 21 Rich. II. c. 17, passed in 1398, that at that time Calais was the only staple; and such it continued to be from this time till it was recovered by the French in 1538, when the staple was established at Bruges. The old staple laws, however, had been considerably relaxed in the course of that long interval.

The history of the staple is an important part of the history of our early foreign commerce, of which it in some degree illustrates the growth and gradual extension from the progressive development of the resources of the country, as well as the artificial bonds and incumbrances against the pressure and entanglement of which the principle of that natural growth had to force its way. We now proceed to quote some further instances of the perplexities, the blunders, and the generally oppressive or annoying character of our ancient commercial legislation.

One of the prerogatives assumed by the crown in those days, somewhat similar in its nature to that of fixing the staple of the foreign trade of the kingdom, was the right of restricting all mercantile dealings whatever, for a time, to a certain place. Thus, Matthew Paris tells us that, in the year 1245, Henry III. proclaimed a fair to be held at Westminster, on which occasion he ordered that all the traders of London should shut up their shops, and carry their goods to be sold at the fair, and that all

* Maepherson, Annals of Com. i. 604.

other fairs throughout England should be suspended during the fifteen days it was appointed to last. The king's object, no doubt, was to obtain a supply of money from the tolls and other dues of the market. What made this interference be felt as a greater hardship was, that the weather, all the time of the fair, happened to be excessively bad ; so that not only the goods were spoilt, exposed as they were to the rain in tents only covered with cloth, and that probably imperfectly enough ; but the dealers themselves, who were obliged to eat their victuals with their feet in the mud, and the wind and wet about their ears, suffered intolerably. Four years afterwards the king repeated the same piece of tyranny, and was again seconded by the elements in a similar fashion. This time, too, the historian tells us, scarcely any buyers came to the fair ; so that it is no wonder the unfortunate merchants were loud in expressing their dissatisfaction. But the king, he adds, did not mind the imprecations of the people.

There was nothing that more troubled and bewildered both the legislature and the popular understanding, during the whole of this period, than the new phenomena connected with the increasing foreign trade of the country. The advantages of this augmented intercourse with other parts of the world were sensibly enough felt, but very imperfectly comprehended ; hence one scheme after another to retain the benefit upon terms wholly inconsistent with the necessary conditions of its existence. Of course, in all exchange of commodities between two countries, besides that supply of the respective wants of each which constitutes the foundation or sustaining element of the commerce, a certain portion of what the consumer pays must fall to the share of the persons by whose agency the commerce is carried on. It is this that properly forms the profits of the commerce, as distinguished from its mere advantages or conveniences. The general advantages of the commerce, apart from the profits of the agents, are alone the proper concern of the community : as for the mere profits of the agency the only interest of the community is, that they shall be as low as possible.

From the course, however, that the popular feeling has at all times taken, it might be supposed that the very contrary was the case ; for the cry has constantly been in favour of making this agency, as far as possible, a monopoly in the hands of the native merchants, although the effect of the exclusion of foreign competition, if it could be accomplished, really could be nothing else than an enhancement of the profits of the agency, and consequently of the charge upon the consumer. In fact, if the exclusion were not expected to produce this effect, it never would be sought for by the native merchants. That it should be sought for by them is natural enough, but that they should be supported in this demand by the community at large is only an instance of popular prejudice and delusion. In all commerce, and especially in all foreign commerce, a body of intermediate agents, to manage the exchange of the commodities, is indispensable ; the goods must be brought from the one country to the other, which makes what is called the carrying trade ; they must be collected in shops or warehouses for distribution by sale ; even their original production, in many cases, cannot be efficiently accomplished without the regular assistance of a third class of persons,—namely, dealers in money or in credit. But to the public at large it is really a matter of perfect indifference whether these merchants, ship-owners, and bankers or other capitalists, be natives or foreigners. Not so, however, thought our ancestors in the infancy of our foreign commerce. The commerce itself was sufficiently acceptable ; but the foreigners, by whose aid it was necessarily in part carried on, were the objects of a most intense and restless jealousy. Whatever portion of the profits of the commerce fell to their share was looked upon as nothing better than so much plunder. This feeling was even in some degree extended to the whole of the foreign nation with which the commerce was carried on ; and, in the notion that all trade was of the nature of a contest between two adverse parties, and that whatever the one country gained the other lost, the inflammation of the popular mind occasionally rose to such a height that nothing less would sa-

tisfy it than an abjuration of the foreign trade altogether. But it never was long before this precipitate resolution was repented of and revoked.

In the wars between Henry III. and his barons, the latter endeavoured to turn to account against the king the national jealousy of foreigners, which his partiality to his wife's French connexions had greatly exasperated. In 1261 they passed a law which may be regarded as the first attempt to establish what has been called, in modern times, the manufacturing system. It prohibited the exportation of wool, the chief staple of the country, and ordained that no woollen cloths should be worn except such as were manufactured at home. Whatever may be thought of the policy of nursing the infancy of domestic manufactures in certain circumstances by protections of this description, the present attempt was undoubtedly premature, and its authors confessed as much by appending to their prohibition against the importation of foreign cloth an injunction or recommendation that all persons should avoid every superfluity in dress. What were thus denounced as extravagant superfluities were evidently those finer fabrics which could not yet be produced in England. The effect of this law, in so far as it was enforced or obeyed, could only have been to add to the general distress, by embarrassing more or less all classes of persons that had been ever so remotely connected with the foreign trade, and above all others the chief body of producers in the kingdom. If the wool was not to go out of the country, much wealth both in money and in goods would be prevented from coming in, and all the branches of industry which that wealth had hitherto contributed to sustain and feed would suffer depression.

It would appear that, either from want of skill, or a scarcity of woad in consequence of the usual importations from the continent being checked, dyed cloths could not be obtained in sufficient quantity in England a few years after this time; for it is recorded that many people were now wont to dress themselves in cloth of the natural colour of the wool. Simon de Montford, it seems, professed to be an admirer of this plainness of apparel, and

was accustomed to maintain that foreign commerce was unnecessary, the produce of the country being fully sufficient to supply all the wants of its inhabitants. And so no doubt it was, and would be still, on this principle of rigidly eschewing all superfluities ; but that is the principle of the stationary and savage state, not of civilization and progressive improvement.

The prohibition against the importation of foreign cloth, however, appears to have been soon repealed. In 1271, when disputes broke out between Henry and the Countess of Flanders, we find it renewed in terms which imply that the trade had for some time previous been carried on as usual. This second suspension, also, was of short duration ; and on various subsequent occasions, on which the attempt was made to break off the natural commercial intercourse between the English producers and the Flemish manufacturers, the result was the same ; the inconvenience was found to be so intolerable to both countries that it never was submitted to for more than a few months or weeks.

Absurd regulations, however, were from time to time imposed on the trade carried on by foreigners, the temper and principle of which would, if carried out, have led to its complete extinction, and which, half measures as they were, could only have had the effect of diminishing its natural advantages. In 1275, for instance, an order was issued by Edward I., obliging all foreign merchants to sell their goods within forty days after their arrival. If foreigners continued to resort to the country in the face of the additional risks created by this law,—risks of inadequate returns if they complied with it, of detection and punishment if they attempted to evade it,—we may be certain they exacted a full equivalent in the shape of higher prices for their goods ; or, if they failed to do this, they must soon have been forced to give up the trade altogether, for there was no other way by which it could be made to yield its usual profits.

In the year 1290 the bigotry and rapacity of Edward I. inflicted what must have proved a severe blow upon the commerce of the kingdom by the sudden expulsion of the

whole body of the Jews. The principal pretence for this proceeding appears to have been that the Jews had been the chief clippers of the coin. The principal motive, no doubt, was the replenishing of the royal exchequer by the spoil of the hated and helpless race; for the Jews had always been regarded, not only as foreigners and aliens, but as, in a manner, the absolute property of the crown, which, under that view, was restrained from pillaging and otherwise oppressing them to any extent it chose by neither law nor custom, nor by anything except a prudent calculation of how far it might go without injury to its own interests—without impairing the productiveness of the source from which it drew its iniquitous profits. In the present instance even this consideration gave way under the pressure of some strong excitement or urgent need, the popular feeling, we may be sure, eagerly seconding the royal passion or policy. The manner of the proceeding was as barbarous as the motive, whether fanaticism or thirst of plunder, might prepare us to expect. Only two months' warning was given before the fatal 1st of November, on which day it was ordered that every Jew should quit England, never to return, on pain of death. Not only all their houses and tenements, but also all their bonds for money owing them by Christians, were seized by the king, who afterwards exacted payment of the debts, as if the money had been lent by himself. The accounts differ as to whether they were allowed to carry their moveable property with them; as much, of course, was left them as might defray their charges in crossing the sea, and we may suppose they secretly conveyed away as much more as they could; it is affirmed that whole ship-loads of them were made away with by the sailors on their passage for the sake of what they had with them. The common account is that the exact number thus driven out was 16,511; and no Jew was ever afterwards allowed to set foot in this country, till, without any change having been made in the law, they quietly began to reappear after the Restoration, three hundred and seventy years subsequent to their general expulsion.

No foreign merchants were in those days allowed to reside in England except by special licence from the king ; and even under this protection, they were subjected to various oppressive liabilities. It was not till 1303 that a general charter was granted by Edward I., permitting the merchants of Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Navarre, Lombardy, Tuscany, Provence, Catalonia, Aquitaine, Toulouse, Quercy, Flanders, Brabant, and all other foreign countries, to come safely to any of the dominions of the English crown with all kinds of merchandize, to sell their goods, and to reside under the protection of the laws. But even this general toleration was clogged with many restrictions. The goods imported, with the exception of spices and mercery, were only to be sold wholesale. No wine was to be carried out of the country without special licence. Above all, no relaxation was granted of the ancient grievous liability under which every resident stranger was placed of being answerable for the debts and even for the crimes of every other foreign resident. It appears from the records of the Exchequer that, in 1306, a number of foreign merchants were committed to the Tower, and there detained until they consented severally to give security that none of their number should leave the kingdom, or export anything from it, without the king's special licence. Each of them was at the same time obliged to give in an account of the whole amount of his property, both in money and goods. Security against being subjected to this kind of treatment had been accorded in a few particular instances ; but it was not till the year 1353 that the law was formally altered by the Statute of the Staple already mentioned, and the ancient practice was not wholly discontinued till long afterwards.

The general charter of 1303 was followed within four years by a still more extraordinary attempt than any that had yet been made to control the natural course of commerce. In 1307, Edward issued an order prohibiting either coined money or bullion to be carried out of the country on any account. The merchants, therefore, who came from other countries were now reduced to the

necessity of either directly bartering their commodities for the produce of the kingdom, or, if they sold them for money in the first instance, of investing the proceeds in other goods before they could be permitted to return home. This was a restriction so thoroughly opposed to every commercial principle that it could not be rigidly maintained ; the very year following its promulgation, an exemption from it was accorded to the merchants of France by the new king, Edward II., and similar relaxations of it were afterwards permitted in other cases. But, although from its nature it did not admit of being strictly enforced, it long continued to be regarded as the law of the country, and repeated attempts were made to secure its observance. In 1335, by the 9th Edw. III. st. 2, it was enacted that no person should henceforth carry out of the kingdom either money or plate without special licence, upon pain of forfeiture of whatever he should so convey away. Sworn searchers were appointed to see that the law was observed at all the ports ; and it was further ordered that the inn-keepers at every port should be sworn to search their guests : the fourth part of all forfeits was assigned as the reward of the searchers. In 1343, by the 17th Edw. III., nearly the same regulations were repeated, the principal variation being, that, to induce them to do their duty more diligently, the reward of the searchers was now raised to a third part of the forfeits, and penalties were provided for their neglect or connivance. We may gather from all this that the law had been extensively evaded. At length permission was given generally to foreign merchants to carry away one half of the money for which they sold their goods ; the law is thus stated in the 14th Rich. II. c. 1, passed in 1390, and more explicitly in the 2nd Hen. IV. c. 5, passed in 1400 ; but it is still expressly ordered by the former of these statutes that every alien bringing any merchandize into England shall find sufficient sureties before the officers of the customs to expend the value of half of what he imports, at the least, in the purchase of wools, leather, woolfels, lead, tin, butter, cheese, cloths, or other commodities of the land.

The ignorance and misconception from which all this legislation proceeded, are exhibited in a striking point of view by the fact that the above-mentioned original order of Edward I., prohibiting the exportation of money, expressly permits the amount of the money to be remitted abroad in bills of exchange. And at all times, while the exportation of money was forbidden, the remittance of bills seems to have been allowed. But a bill of exchange remitted abroad is merely an order that a certain party in the foreign country shall receive a sum of money which is due to the drawer of the bill, and which would otherwise have to be sent to the country where he resides ; if no such money were due, the bill would not be negotiable ; every such bill, therefore, if it did not carry money out of the country, produced precisely the same effect by preventing money from coming in. It was fit and natural enough, however, that this simple matter should fail to be perceived in times when it was thought that a great advantage was gained by compelling the foreign merchant to sell his goods for produce instead of for the money which the produce was worth ; indeed it may be fairly said, instead of for less money than the producee was worth, for all restraints of this description inevitably operate to enhance the price of what is prevented from being openly bought and sold on the terms that would be naturally agreed upon between the parties themselves.

Another strange attempt of the English commercial legislation of those times was to impose a certain measure upon all foreign cloths brought to the country. By the Act 2 Edw. III. c. 14, passed in 1328, it was ordered that, from the Feast of St. Michael ensuing, all cloths that were imported should be measured by the king's aulnagers, and that all those that were not found to be of a certain specified length and breadth should be forfeited to the king. The dimensions fixed by the statute were, for cloth of ray (supposed to mean striped cloth), 28 yards in length by 6 quarters in breadth ; and for coloured cloth, 26 yards in length by 6½ quarters in breadth. The regulation of weights and measures within

the kingdom was a proper subject of legislation, and had necessarily engaged attention long before this date; although, at a period when science was unknown, the methods resorted to were necessarily very inartificial, and sometimes singular enough; Henry I., for example, soon after he came to the throne, in ordaining that the ell or yard should be of uniform length throughout the kingdom, could find no better standard for it than the length of his own arm. It might also have been found expedient, both for fiscal and other purposes, to direct that all cloth made for sale within the kingdom should be of certain specified dimensions; regulations to that effect have at least been usual down to our own day. But it was to stretch legislation on such matters beyond all reasonable limits to attempt to fix a measure for the cloth made in all foreign countries. Such a law, in so far as it was enforced, could only have the effect of diminishing the supply,—in other words, of raising the prices of foreign goods. But, like most of the other absurd restrictions of the same character, the maintenance of this regulation was soon found to be impracticable: if it had been rigorously insisted upon, it would have excluded the manufactured goods of certain foreign countries from the English market altogether; and accordingly, after giving a great deal of useless annoyance both to foreign merchants and their English customers, and after special exemptions from it had been granted to several nations, it was at last repealed by the 27 Edw. III. st. 1, c. 4, passed in 1353, which provided that, “whereas the great men and commons have showed to our lord the king how divers merchants, as well foreigners as denizens, have withdrawn them, and yet do withdraw them, to come with cloths into England, to the great damage of the king and of all his people, because that the king’s aulnager surmiseth to merchant strangers that their cloths be not of assize,” therefore no foreign cloths should in future be forfeited on that account, but, when any was found to be under assize, it should simply be marked by the aulnager, that a proportionate abatement might be made in the price.

This was also the era of various statutes against the

supposed mischiefs of forestalling. The statute “*De Pistoribus*” (attributed by some to the 51st year of Hen. III., by others to the 13th of Edw. I.) contains the following impassioned description and denunciation of this offence : “ But especially be it commanded, on the behalf of our lord the king, that no forestaller be suffered to dwell in any town, which is an open oppressor of poor people, and of all the commonalty, and an enemy of the whole shire and country ; which for greediness of his private gains doth prevent others in buying grain, fish, herring, or any other thing to be sold coming by land or water, oppressing the poor and deceiving the rich ; which carrieth away such things, intending to sell them more dear ; the which come to merchant strangers that bring merchandize, offering them to buy, and informing them that their goods might be dearer sold than they intended to sell, and an whole town or a country is deceived by such craft and subtlety.” It might be supposed from all this that the forestaller bought the commodity for the purpose of throwing it into the sea or otherwise destroying it ; it seems to have been forgotten that, like all other dealers, he bought it only that he might sell it again for more than it cost him, that is to say, that he might preserve it for a time of still higher demand and greater necessity. But for him, when that time of greater scarcity came, there would be no provision for it ; if the people were pinched now, they would be starved then. The forestaller is merely the economical distributor, who, by preventing waste at one time, prevents absolute want at another ; he destroys nothing ; on the contrary, whatever he reserves from present consumption, is sure to be reproduced by him in full at a future day, when it will be still more needed. Were it otherwise, forestalling would be the most losing of all trades, and no law would be required to put it down. The English laws against forestalling, regrating, and engrossing, however, cannot well be made a reproach to the thirteenth century, seeing that they were formally renewed and extended in the sixteenth,* and were not finally removed from the

* By the 5 and 6 Edward VI. c. 14 and 15.

Statute Book till towards the end of the eighteenth.* And even yet forestalling is considered to be a misdemeanour at common law, and punishable by fine and imprisonment.

A still more direct attempt to derange the natural balance of supply and demand was made by parliament in 1315, when, with the view of relieving the people from the pressure of a severe famine, it was enacted that all articles of food should be sold at certain prescribed prices. It was strangely forgotten that the evil did not lie in the high prices, but the scarcity, of which they were the necessary consequence. That scarcity, of course, the act of parliament could not cure. In fact, food became more difficult to procure than ever; for even those who had any to sell, and would have brought it to market if they could have had a fair price for it, withheld it rather than dispose of it below its value. What was sold was for the most part sold at a price which violated the law, and which was made still higher than it would otherwise have been by the trouble and risk which the illegality of the transaction involved. Butcher-meat disappeared altogether; poultry, an article of large consumption in those times, became nearly as scarce; grain was only to be had at enormous prices. The result was, that the king and the parliament, after a few months, becoming convinced of their mistake, hastened to repeal the act.

The same thing in principle and effect, however, was repeated not many years after, by acts passed to fix the wages of labourers,—in other words, the price of the commodity called labour. In 1349 (the 23rd of Edw. III.), immediately after what is called the Great pestilence, there was issued (apparently by the authority of the king, although it is printed as a statute) “An Ordinance concerning Labourers and Servants;” which directed, first, that persons of the class of servants should be bound to serve when required; and secondly, that they should serve for the same wages that were

* By the 12 Geo. III. c. 71.

accustomed to be given three years before. This ordinance, indeed, further proceeded to enjoin that all dealers in victual should be bound to sell the same "for a reasonable price," and inflicted a penalty upon persons offending against that enactment—although it did not presume expressly to fix a maximum of prices. The next year, by the 25 Edw. III., st. 2,* after a preamble, declaring that servants had had no regard to the preceding ordinance, "but to their ease and singular covetise," the parliament established a set of new provisions for effecting its object: this act, however, contains nothing on the subject of the prices of provisions. The Statute of Labourers was confirmed by parliament in 1360 (by the 34 Edw. III. c. 9), and its principle was long obstinately clung to by the legislature, notwithstanding the constant experience of its inefficiency, and indeed of its positive mischief, and its direct tendency to defeat its own proposed object; for a law is rarely harmless because it is of impracticable execution; the unskilful surgery of the body politic, as of the body natural, tears and tortures when it does not cure, and fixes deeper and more firmly the barb which it fails to extract. By the 13 Rich. II. st. 1, c. 8 (passed in 1389-90), it is ordained that, "forasmuch as a man cannot put the price of corn and other victuals in certain," the justices of peace shall every year make proclamation "by their discretion, according to the dearth of victuals, how much every mason, carpenter, tiler, and other craftsmen, workmen, and other labourers by the day, as well in harvest as in other times of the year, after their degree, shall take by the day, with meat and drink, or without meat and drink, and that every man obey to such proclamations from time to time, as a thing done by statute." It is also ordered that victuallers "shall have reasonable gains, according to the discretion and limitation of the said justices, and no more, upon pain to be grievously punished, according to the discretion of the said justices." Finally, provision is made for the correct keeping of the assize (or assess-

* Commonly entitled Statute the First.

ment from time to time) of the prices of bread and ale. The earliest notice of an assize in England is found in the rolls of parliament for 1203, the 5th of John; but the first introduction of the practice is probably of older date. The most ancient law upon the subject that has been preserved is that entitled the *Assisa Panis et Cerevisiae*, commonly assigned to the 51st Hen. III. (A.D. 1266). The assize of bread and ale, it is to be remembered, determined the prices of these commodities, not arbitrarily, but by a scale regulated according to the market-prices of wheat, barley, and oats, so that the prices that were really fixed were those of baking and of brewing. The assize of bread was re-enacted so lately as the beginning of the last century, and was only abolished in London and its neighbourhood about thirty years ago: in regard to other places, although it has fallen into disuse, the old law still remains unrepealed. But various other articles, such as wine, fish, tiles, cloths, wood, coal, billets, &c., have at different times been made subject to assize; and in the case of most of these the assize was a perfectly arbitrary determination of the price. The present period furnishes us with a curious example of the manner in which some of these attempts operated. By an ordinance issued in 1357 (commonly called the 31 Edw. III. st. 2), it was directed that no herrings should be sold for a higher price than forty shillings the last. But, in 1361, we find the king and his council, in a second ordinance (commonly called the statute 35 Edw. III.), frankly confessing that the effect of the attempt to fix prices in this case had been, "that the sale of herring is much decayed, and the people greatly endamaged, that is to say, that many merchants coming to the fair, as well labourers and servants as other, do bargain for herring, and every of them, by malice and envy, increase upon other, and, if one proffer forty shillings, another will proffer ten shillings more, and the third sixty shillings, and so every one surmounteth other in the bargain, and such proffers extend to more than the prie of the herring upon which the fishers proffered it to sell at the beginning." The

ordinance promulgated with the intention of keeping down the price of herrings, had actually raised it. Wherefore "we," concludes the new statute, "perceiving the mischiefs and grievances aforesaid, by the advice and assent of our parliament, will and grant, that it shall be lawful to every man, of what condition that he may be, merchant or other, to buy herring openly, and not privily, at such price as may be agreed betwixt him and the seller of the same herring." This failure, however, did not deter the parliament two years after from fixing a price for poultry (by the statute 37 Edw. III. c. 3); but the next year that also was repealed by the 38 Edw. III. st. 1, c. 2, which ordained that all people, in regard to buying and selling and the other matters treated of in the preceding statute, should be as free as they were before it passed, and as they were in the time of the king's grandfather and his other good progenitors.

Notwithstanding, however, the impediments and embarrassments occasioned by all this blind and contradictory legislation, English commerce undoubtedly made a very considerable progress in the course of the space of nearly two centuries included within the period now under review.

The directing property of the magnet, and its application in the mariner's compass, appear to have become known in Europe towards the end of the twelfth century, and the instrument was probably in common use among navigators soon after the middle of the thirteenth. Both Chaucer the English, and Barbour the Scottish poet, allude familiarly to the compass in the latter part of the fourteenth century. Barbour tells us that Robert Bruce and his companions, when crossing, during the night, from Arran to the coast of Carrick, in 1307, steered by the light of the fire they saw on the shore,—“for they na needle had nor stane:” the words seem to imply rather that they were by accident without a compass, than that the instrument was not then known. Chaucer, in his prose treatise on the Astrolabe, says that the sailors reckon thirty-two parts (or points) of the horizon; evidently referring to the present division of the card, of

which the people of Bruges are said to have been the authors. Gioia, of Amalfi, who flourished in the beginning of this century, is supposed to have been the first who attached a divided card to the needle ; but his card seems to have had only eight winds or points drawn upon it.

The contemporary chroniclers have not recorded the effects produced by the introduction of the compass on navigation and commerce ; but it must have given a great impulse to both. A few interesting facts, however, connected with English shipping during the present period have been preserved. Henry III. appears to have had some ships of his own. One of the entries in the Liberate Roll of the tenth year of his reign is as follows :—“ Henry, by the grace of God, &c.—Pay out of our treasury to Reynold de Bernevall and Brother Thomas, of the Temple, twenty-two marks and a half, for repairs, &c. of our great ship ; also pay to the six masters of our great ship, to wit, to Stephen le Vel, one mark ; Germanus de la Rie, one mark ; John, the son of Sampson, one mark ; Colmo de Warham, one mark ; Robert Gaillard, one mark ; and Simon Westlegrei, one mark. Witness ourself at Westminster, the 17th day of May, in the tenth year of our reign. For the mariners of the great ship.”* The vessel here referred to is, we suppose, the large ship called the Queen, which, in 1232, Henry chartered to John Blancbally, for the life of the latter, for an annual payment of fifty marks.† In an order of the same king to the barons of the Cinque Ports, in 1242, mention is made of the king’s galley of Bristol, and of the king’s galleys in Ireland. Edward I. probably had a much more numerous navy. When he was preparing for his war with France, in 1294, this king divided his navy into three fleets, over each of which he placed an admiral, this being the first time that that title is mentioned in English history. We are not, however, to suppose that all the ships forming these three fleets

* Issues of the Exchequer from Henry III. to Henry VI. inclusive. By Frederick Devon. 4to. Lon. 1837.

† Madox’s Hist. of Excheq., c. 13, § 11.

were the property of the king ; the royal navy was still, as it had heretofore been, chiefly composed of vessels belonging to private merchants which were pressed for the public service. The names of the following king's ships are mentioned in an Issue Roll of the ninth of Edward II. :—the Peter, the Bernard, the Marion, the Mary, and the Catherine ; all of Westminster.* In the reign of Edward III. we find many ships^{*} belonging to Yarmouth, Bristol, Lynne, Hull, Ravensere, and other ports, distinguished as ships of war ; but this designation does not seem to imply that they were royal or public property.

The dominion of the four seas appears to have been first distinctly claimed by Edward III. At this time the Cinque Ports were bound by their charter to have fifty-seven ships in readiness at all times for the king's service ; and Edward also retained in his pay a fleet of galleys, supplied, according to contract, by the Genoese. By far the greater number, however, of the vessels employed in every considerable naval expedition of those times consisted, as we have said, of the private merchantmen. The English mercantile navy was now very considerable. When Henry III., in 1253, ordered all the vessels in the country to be seized and employed in an expedition against the rebel barons of Gascony, the number of them, Matthew Paris tells us, was found to be above a thousand, of which three hundred were large ships. The foreign as well as the English vessels, however, are included in this enumeration ; the former as well as the latter were subject to be thus pressed. According to an account given in one of the Cotton manuscripts of the fleet employed by Edward III. at the siege of Calais in 1346, it consisted of 25 ships belonging to the king, which carried 419 mariners ; of 37 foreign ships (from Bayonne, Spain, Flanders, and Guelderland), manned by 780 mariners ; of one vessel from Ireland, carrying 25 men ; and of 710 vessels belonging to Eng-

* Issues of Excheq. ut supra. The editor adds—"The names of other ships are also mentioned."

lish ports, the crews of which amounted to 14,151 persons. These merchantmen were divided into the south and the north fleet, according as they belonged to the ports south or north of the Thames. The places that supplied the greatest numbers of ships and men were the following:—London, 25 ships with 662 men; Margate, 15 with 160; Sandwich, 22 with 504; Dover, 16 with 336; Winchelsea, 21 with 596; Weymouth, 20 with 264; Newcastle, 17 with 414; Hull, 16 with 466; Grimsby, 11 with 171; Exmouth, 10 with 193; Dartmouth, 31 with 757; Plymouth, 26 with 603; Looe, 20 with 325; Fowey, 47 with 170; Bristol, 24 with 608; Shoreham, 20 with 329; Southampton, 21 with 572; Lynne, 16 with 482; Yarmouth, 43 with 1095; Gosport, 13 with 403; Harwich, 14 with 283; Ipswich, 12 with 239; and Boston, 17 with 361. These, therefore, it may be assumed, were at this time the principal trading towns in the kingdom.

It will be perceived that the vessels, if we may judge from the numbers of the men, were of very various sizes; and none of them could have been of any considerable magnitude. A ship, manned by thirty seamen, which the people of Yarmouth fitted out, in 1254, to carry over Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I., to the Continent, is spoken of with admiration by the writers of the time for its size as well as its beauty. Some foreign ships, however, were considerably larger than any of the English at this period. Thus, one of the vessels which were lent by the Republic of Venice to St. Louis, in 1270, when he set out on his second crusade, measured 125 feet in length, and carried 110 men; but this was reckoned a vessel of extraordinary size even in the Mediterranean. In 1360, Edward III., in an order for arresting all the vessels in the kingdom for an expedition against France, directed that the largest ships should carry 40 mariners, 40 armed men, and 60 archers. A ship which was taken from the French in 1385 is said to have been, a short time before, built for the Norman merchants in the East Country at a cost of 5000 francs (above 830*l.* sterling), and to have been sold by them to Clisson, the

constable of France, for 3000 francs. This was one of eighty vessels of various kinds—ships, galleys, cogs, car-racks, barges, lines, ballingars, &c.—which were captured this same year by the governor of Calais and the seamen of the Cinque Ports. “There were taken,” says the historian Walsingham, “and slain in those ships, 226 seamen and mercenaries. Blessed be God for all things.” One ship taken by the Cinque Port vessels was valued (her cargo no doubt included) at 20,000 marks. But half a century before this we read of Genoese galleys, laden with wool, cloth, and other merchandize, which were reckoned to be worth 60,000*l.* and 70,000*l.* in the money of Genoa.

Some notices that have been preserved of the shipping of Scotland during this period prove its amount to have been more considerable than might be expected. Indeed, that country seems to have had some reputation for ship-building even on the Continent. Matthew Paris relates that one of the great ships in the fleet that accompanied St. Louis on his first crusade, in 1249, had been built at Inverness, for the Earl of St. Paul and Blois. The historian calls her “a wonderful ship,” in allusion, apparently, to her magnitude. Mention is made in an ancient charter of one ship which belonged to the Scottish crown in the reign of Alexander III., who died in 1286; and Fordun states that, at this time, the King of Man was bound to furnish his liege lord, the King of Scots, when required, with five warlike galleys of twenty-four oars, and five of twelve oars; and that other maritime vassals contributed vessels in proportion to their lands. One of Alexander’s commercial laws was of a singular character, if we may believe this historian. In consequence of several merchant-vessels belonging to his subjects having been taken by pirates or lost at sea, while voyaging to foreign parts, he prohibited the merchants of Scotland from exporting any goods in their own vessels for a certain time. The consequence, it is affirmed, was, that before the end of a year numerous foreign vessels arrived with goods of all kinds; and the kingdom obtained a cheaper and more abundant supply of the produce of

other countries than it had ever before enjoyed. If any such effect as this was produced, the law, at the same time that it restrained the native ship-owners from importing goods, probably removed some restrictions that had previously been imposed on the entry into the kingdom of foreign merchants. In the wars between England and Scotland, in the reign of Edward III., the latter country frequently made considerable naval exertions, sometimes by itself, sometimes in conjunction with its allies. In 1335, a vessel belonging to Southampton, laden with wool and other merchandise, was taken by some Scottish and Norman privateers in the mouth of the Thames; and in the following year a numerous fleet of ships and galleys, equipped by the Scots, attacked and plundered Guernsey and Jersey, and captured several English vessels lying at anchor at the Isle of Wight. In the autumn of 1357, again, three Scottish ships of war, carrying 300 chosen armed men, are stated to have cruised on the east coast of England, and greatly annoyed the trade in that quarter, till the equinoctial gales drove them, along with a number of English vessels, into Yarmouth, where they were taken. These appear to have been unauthorised private adventurers, there being at this time a truce between the two countries. The bold enterprise of the Scottish captain, John Mercer, in 1378, till a stop was put to his career by the public spirit of a citizen of London, John Philpot, is famous in our annals. Mercer is said to have been the son of a burgess of Perth, one of the most opulent merchants of Scotland, who, the year before, when returning from abroad, had been driven by stress of weather upon the English coast, and there seized and confined for some time in the castle of Scarborough. It was to revenge this injury that the son fitted out his armament. A few years after this, some privateers of Hull and Newcastle captured a Scottish ship, the cargo of which, according to Walsingham, was valued at 7000 marks.

The most ancient record which presents a general view of the foreign trade of England is an account, preserved in the Exchequer, of the exports and imports, together

with the amount of the customs paid upon them, in the year 1354. The exports here mentioned are, 31,651½ sacks of wool at 6*l.* per sack; 3036 cwt. (120 lbs.) of wool at 40*s.* per cwt.; 65 woolfels, total value 21*s.* 8*d.*; hides to the value of 89*l.* 5*s.*; 4774½ pieces of cloth at 40*s.* each; and 8061½ pieces of worsted stuff at 16*s.* 8*d.* each: total value of the exports, 212,338*l.* 5*s.*, paying customs to the amount of 81,846*l.* 12*s.* 2*d.* Wool therefore would appear, by this account, to have constituted about thirteen-fourteenths of the whole exports of the kingdom. The customs would seem to have been almost entirely derived from wool: the amount paid by the hides and cloth exported amounts only to about 220*l.* The duty on the export of wool exceeded 40 per cent. on the value. The imports mentioned are, 1831 pieces of fine cloths at 6*l.* each; 397½ cwt. of wax at 40*s.* per cwt.; 1829½ tuns of wine at 40*s.* per tun; and linens, mercery, grocery, &c., to the value of 22,943*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.* :—making a total value of 38,383*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.* The great excess, according to this statement, of the exports over the imports, has been regarded as evincing the moderation and sobriety of our ancestors. “But when we look at the articles,” it has been well observed, “and find that of raw materials for manufactures, which constitute so great a part of the modern imports, there was not one single article imported, and that, on the other hand, the exports consisted almost entirely of the most valuable raw materials, and of cloths in an unfinished state, which may therefore also be classed among raw materials, we must acknowledge that it affords only a proof of the low state of manufactures and of commercial knowledge among a people who were obliged to allow foreigners to have the profit of manufacturing their own wool, and finishing their own cloths, and afterwards to repurchase both from them in the form of finished goods.”*

This account is probably to be considered as comprehending only those articles from which the revenue of the customs was derived. We know that several other

* Macpherson, Ann. of Com. i. 554.

articles besides those mentioned were, at least occasionally, exported. A demand for the tin of Britain, for instance, appears to have always existed on the Continent. A Cornish miner, indeed, who had been banished from his native country, is said to have, in the year 1241, discovered some mines of tin in Germany, the produce of which was so abundant that the metal was even imported into England, by which the price in this country was considerably reduced; but this competition certainly did not permanently destroy either the domestic or the export trade in British tin. In 1338 we find Edward III. ordering all the tin in Cornwall and Devonshire, including even what might have been already sold to foreign merchants, to be seized and sent to the Continent, there to be sold on his account, the owners being obliged to accept of a promise of payment in two years. In 1348, it is recorded that the merchants and others complained to the parliament that all the tin of Cornwall was bought and exported by Tidman of Limburgh, so that no Englishman could get any of it; they therefore prayed that it might be freely sold to all merchants; but they received for answer that it was a profit belonging to the prince, and that every lord might make his profit of his own. Cornwall had in 1337 been erected into a duchy in favour of the Black Prince, and settled by act of parliament on the eldest son of the king, as it still remains. The export of tin is mentioned, in 1390, in the statute 14 Rich. II. c. 7, which declares Dartmouth the only port at which it shall be shipped; and also in the following year, in the 15th Rich. II. c. 8, which repeals the last-mentioned act, and allows the exportation of the commodity from any port, but provides that it shall be carried only to Calais, so long as wool shall be carried to that place. Lead, butter, and cheese are likewise, as we have seen, enumerated among the "commodities of the land," in which foreign merchants were compelled, by the 14th Rich. II. c. 1, to invest half the money which they should receive for the commodities they imported. The exportation of lead in particular is repeatedly alluded to in the regulations respecting the staple, and other acts

of parliament; and considerable quantities of that metal are supposed to have been now obtained from the Welsh mines. It may be presumed, also, that iron was occasionally exported during this period, from the statute 28 Edw. III. c. 5 (passed in 1354), which enacts that no iron, whether made in England or imported, shall be carried out of the country. Salted fish, and especially herrings, formed another article of export, at least from the commencement of the thirteenth century, and probably from a much earlier date. Corn appears to have been sometimes exported, sometimes imported, but apparently never without the special licence of the crown. Thus we find Edward III., in 1359, granting liberty to the Flemings to trade in England, and to export corn and other provisions from the country on obtaining his special licence and paying the customs. In 1376, on the other hand, a permission is recorded to have been granted to import 400 quarters of corn from Ireland to Kendal in Westmoreland. In 1382 a general proclamation was issued, prohibiting, under penalty of the confiscation of the vessel and cargo, the exportation of corn or malt to any foreign country, except to the king's territories in Gascony, Bayonne, Calais, Brest, Cherbourg, Berwick-upon-Tweed, and other places of strength belonging to the king. But twelve years afterwards, by the statute 17 Rich. II. c. 7, all English subjects were allowed to export corn to any country not hostile, on paying the due customs—a power, however, being still reserved to the king's council to stop the exportation if necessary. The introduction of the use of coal as an article both of foreign trade and of domestic consumption is probably to be assigned to this period, though some have been disposed to carry it farther back. The earliest authentic document in which coal is distinctly mentioned is an order of Henry III., in 1245, for an inquisition into trespasses committed in the royal forests, in which inquiry is directed to be made respecting sea-coal ("de carbone maris") found in the forests. This expression appears to imply that coals had before this time been brought to London by sea, probably from Newcastle. Sea-coal Lane (between

Skinner Street and Farringdon Street) is mentioned by that name in a charter of the year 1253. Regulations are laid down for the sale of coals in the statutes of the guild of Berwick-upon-Tweed, which were established in 1284. There is extant a charter of William of Obervell, in 1291, granting liberty to the monks of Dunfermline, in Scotland, to dig coals for their own use in his lands of Pittencrief, but prohibiting them from selling any. It is probable, however, that this description of fuel was not as yet much used for domestic purposes ; for the smoke, or smell, of a coal fire was at first thought to be highly noxious. " This same year (1306)," says Maitland, in his History of London, " sea-coals being very much used in the suburbs of London by brewers, dyers, and others requiring great fires, the nobility and gentry resorting thither complained thereof to the king as a public nuisance, whereby they said the air was infested with a noisome smell, and a thick cloud, to the great endangering of the health of the inhabitants ; wherefore a proclamation was issued, strictly forbidding the use of that fuel. But, little regard being paid thereunto, the king appointed a commission of Oyer and Terminer to inquire after those who had contumaciously acted in open defiance to his proclamation, strictly commanding all such to be punished by pecuniary mulcts ; and for the second offence to have their kilns and furnaces destroyed." What would these sensitive alarmists of the fourteenth century have said if they could have been informed that the day would come when London should have constantly some ten or twelve tons of coal-dust suspended over it ? The prejudice against coal fires, however, seems to have in no long time died away. In 1325 we find mention made of the exportation of coals from Newcastle to France ; and the first leases of coal-works in the neighbourhood of that town of which there is any account are dated only a few years later. They were granted by the monks of Tynemouth to various persons at annual rents, varying from two to about five pounds. Ten shillings' worth of Newcastle coals are recorded to have been purchased for the coronation of Edward III. in 1327. Before

the end of the fourteenth century there is reason to believe that an active trade was carried on in the conveyance of Newcastle coal by sea to London and elsewhere.

Wool, however, was during the whole of this period, as for a long time afterwards, the great staple of the kingdom. In 1279, in a petition to Edward I., the nobles asserted that the wool produced in England, and mostly exported to Flanders, was nearly equal to half the land in value. English wool appears also to have been in great request in France, in which country, as well as in Flanders, the manufacture of woollen cloth was early established. Little cloth, as we have already had occasion to observe, was made in England, and that little only of the coarsest description, till the wise policy of Edward III., by a grant dated in 1331, invited weavers, dyers, and fullers, from Flanders, to come over and settle in the country, promising them his protection and favour on condition that they should carry on their trades here, and communicate the knowledge of them to his subjects. The first person who accepted of this invitation was John Kempe, a weaver of woollen cloth: he came over with his goods and chattels, his servants and his apprentices. Many of his countrymen soon followed. A few years later other weavers came over from Brabant and Zealand; and thus was established certainly the first manufacture of *fine* woollen cloths in England. It was many years, however, as we have seen, before this infant manufacture was able even to supply the domestic demand, far less to maintain any export trade in woollens. The cloths of the Continent, in spite of various legislative attempts to exclude them, long continued to be imported in considerable quantities. The 4774½ pieces of cloth exported in 1354 were evidently, from their price, of the old coarse fabric of the country. Large quantities of the English wool also continued annually to go abroad. With the view of keeping up the price of the article,* it was enacted by the statute 14 Rich. II. c. 4, passed in 1390, that no denizen of England should buy wool except of

* Per meutz garder le haut pris des leyns.

the owners of the sheep, and for his own use. In other words, the entire export trade in the commodity was made over to the foreign merchant, and he was at the same time confined to the export trade. The object obviously was to secure to the grower not only his proper profits, but in addition those of the wool-merchant and retailer, in so far as regarded the domestic consumption. But, besides the injury to the native merchant by his exclusion from the export trade, it was strangely forgotten that the monopoly of that trade secured to the foreigner must have deprived the grower of perhaps half his customers,—namely, of all the English dealers who would have purchased the article for exportation; and must thus, by diminishing competition, have tended to depress prices instead of raising them. Such, accordingly, is stated to have been the effect produced. The contemporary historian Knyghton tells us that, in consequence of this prohibition of the export of wool by English merchants, the article lay unsold in many places for two and three years, and many of the growers were reduced to the greatest distress. In 1391, however, although the quantity of wool exported is affirmed to have been that year much less than formerly, the customs on it amounted to 160,000*l.* According to Robert of Avesbury, who is supposed to have died about 1356, the annual exportation of wool from England had, in his day, reached to above 100,000 sacks, the customs on which, at the duty of 50*s.* on the sack, would produce a revenue of above 250,000*l.* This estimate, however, is very inconsistent with the official account already quoted of the entire exports and imports for 1354. If it is to be at all received, it ought probably to be assigned to a date considerably later than that at which Avesbury is commonly assumed to have died.

The principal society of foreign merchants at this time established in England appears to have been that of the merchants of Cologne. They had a hall or factory in London called their Gildhall, for the saisine (or legal possession) of which they paid thirty marks to the crown in A.D. 1220. “It seems probable,” says Maepherson,

" that this Gildhall, by the association of the merchants of other cities with those of Cologne, became in time the general factory and residence of all the German merchants in London, and was the same that was afterwards known by the name of the German Gildhall (*Gildhalla Teutonicorum*). It appears that the merchants of Cologne were bound to make a payment of two shillings, probably a reserved annual rent (for we are not told upon what occasions it was payable) out of their Gildhall, besides other customs and demands, from all which they were exempted in the year 1235, by King Henry III., who moreover gave them permission to attend fairs in any part of England, and also to buy and sell in London, saving the liberties of the city."* The principal part of the foreign trade, however, seems to have been in the hands of the Merchants of the Staple, otherwise called the Merchants of England, who, as noticed above, were incorporated at least as early as the year 1313. This society was composed of native merchants.

It has also been affirmed that there existed, so early as the middle of the thirteenth century, an association of English merchants for trading in foreign parts, called the Brotherhood of St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury, from which originated the afterwards celebrated company of the Merchant Adventurers of England; but this story does not rest on any sufficient authority.†

The historian Walsingham has preserved the record of a remarkable proposal which was made in 1379 to Richard II. by an opulent merchant of Genoa. This foreigner, it is said, submitted to the English king a plan for raising the port of Southampton to a pre-eminence over every other in the west of Europe, by making it the deposit and mart of all the Oriental goods which the Genoese used to carry to Flanders, Normandy, and Bretagne, which countries would thenceforth be supplied with these commodities from England. All that the Genoese mer-

* Annals of Com. i. 383.

† See Wheeler's Treatise of Commerce, pp. 10 and 14; and Macpherson, i. 397 and 560.

chant asked, according to Walsingham, was, that he should be allowed to store his goods in the royal castle of Southampton. It is probable, however, that this was only one of the minor features of his plan, which must have been chiefly dependent for its success upon the resources and connexions of its author, the spirit with which it was taken up and supported by the English king, and the natural aptitude of the port of Southampton to serve as a reservoir of the Oriental trade. As yet, it is to be remembered, no direct trade existed between India and Europe; all the produce of the former that found its way to the latter was procured by the merchants of Venice, Genoa, and other cities of Italy, from the emporia in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean, of which the principal at this time were Acre, Constantinople, and Alexandria. It is not very obvious what advantage the Italian importers were to expect from bringing all their goods in the first instance to Southampton, instead of proceeding with them directly to the continental markets. Walsingham says it was expected, if the plan had been carried into execution, that pepper would have been sold in England at four pennies a pound, and other spices at a proportionably low rate. Silk was now manufactured, and the silk-worm reared, in Italy and other countries of the south of Europe, and little, if any, was brought from Asia; so that spiceries and fruits seem to have been the principal commodities which were received from the eastern trade. The cargo of a Genoese ship, which was driven ashore at Dunster, in Somersetshire, in 1380, consisted of green ginger cured with lemon-juice, one bale of arquinetta,* dried grapes or raisins, sulphur, 172 bales of wadde (perhaps woad), 22 bales of writing-paper, white sugar (perhaps sugar-candy), 6 bales of empty boxes, dried prunes, 8 bales of *risæ* (probably rice), 5 bales of cinnamon, 1 pipe

* Both Anderson and Macpherson quote this term from the original statement in the *Fœdera* (vii. 233), without either explanation or question. We have not been able to discover the meaning of the word.

“pulveris salvistri,” the meaning of which is unknown, and 5 bales of bussus (probably fine Egyptian flax). Some Genoese cogs and earracks, however, bound for Flanders, that were seized on the coast of Kent in 1386, are said to have been laden not only with spices, but with wines, stuffs of gold and silk, gold, silver, precious stones, &c. The scheme of the Genoese merchant with regard to Southampton was put an end to by its author being murdered in the streets of London by assassins, whom some English merchants are charged with having hired, in the apprehension that his proposal was calculated to be injurious to their interests. It seems to have been one of those bold designs which have more in their character of the prophetic than of the practical ; it was a conception that shot ahead of the age, and the attempt to realise it at that time would probably, in the most favourable circumstances, have proved a failure ; but this selection of Southampton for a great European emporium in the fourteenth century may be regarded as in some degree an anticipation of the project which has been accomplished in the nineteenth, of bringing that place within a few hours' distance of London by means of a railway, an improvement which in course of time may have the effect of turning the natural advantages of its position to full account by making it one of the ports of the metropolis.

A few facts remain to be added respecting the commerce of Scotland during this period, in addition to those that have already been incidentally noticed. The chief seat of the Scottish foreign trade continued to be at Berwick till the capture of that town by Edward I. in 1296. A society of Flemish merchants, similar, apparently, to the Teutonic Gildhall of London, was established in that place ; they greatly distinguished themselves by the gallantry with which they defended a strong building, called the Red Hall, which was their factory, in the siege. Berwick, before this catastrophic, is described in the contemporary chronicle of Lanercost as a second Alexandria, for the number of its inhabitants and the extent of its commerce. The sea, it is added, was its wealth ; the

waters were its walls ; and the opulent citizens were very liberal in their donations to religious houses. The customs of Berwick were rented from Alexander III. by a merchant of Gascony for 2197*l.* 8*s.*, a sum which would in those days have bought about 16,000 quarters of wheat. “ By the agency of the merchants of Berwick, the wool, hides, woolfels, and other wares, the produce of Roxburgh, Jedburgh, and all the adjacent country, were shipped for foreign countries, or sold upon the spot to the Flemish company. The exportation of salmon appears to have been also a considerable branch of their trade, as we find it some time after an object of attention to the legislature of England, and the regulation of it entrusted to the great officers of the government. When Edward III. wanted two thousand salmon for his own use in the year 1361, he sent orders to procure them for him at Berwick (then belonging to England) and Newcastle—no doubt the places most famous for them in his dominions.”* Berwick, however, never recovered from the blow given to its prosperity by the destructive sack of 1296. In the middle of the following century we find the Scottish pearls still exported to the continent. In the statutes of the goldsmiths of Paris, drawn up in 1355, it is ordered that no worker in gold or silver shall set any Scottish pearls along with oriental ones, except in large jewels (that is, figures adorned with jewellery) for churches. The Scottish greyhounds were also at this time in request in other countries. “ The trade of driving cattle from Scotland for sale in England, which has continued down to the present day,” Mr. Macpherson observes, “ is at least as old as the times now under our consideration ; for we find a letter of safe conduct granted (12th January, 1359) to Andrew Moray and Alan Erskine, two Scottish drovers, with three horsemen and their servants, for travelling through England or the king’s foreign dominions for a year, with horses, oxen, cows, and other goods and merchandise.”† An act of the Scottish parliament in 1367 orders the strict levying

* Macpherson, i. 446.

† Ibid., i. 561.

of the duties formerly imposed of forty pennies in the pound on the price of all horses, and twelve pennies on that of all oxen and cows carried out of the country. Both corn and malt were often imported into Scotland at this period from England and other countries.

From Ireland there was now a considerable exportation both of raw produce and of manufactured goods. In the records of the Exchequer for the first year of Edward I. a notice occurs of some cloth of Ireland having been stolen at Winchester in the preceding reign, along with some cloth of Abingdon, and some cloth of London called burrel. Mention has been made above of the supplies of corn that appear to have been occasionally obtained from Ireland. It seems to have been exported to the continent as well as to England, till an ordinance was issued in 1288, prohibiting corn and other victuals and merchandise from being carried from Ireland anywhere except to England and Wales. Yet, in 1291, we find some Flemish merchants mentioned as being in the ports of Waterford, Youghall, and Cork. In 1300, while Edward I. was in Scotland, the people of Drogheda sent him a present of eighty tuns of wine to Kirkcudbright in a vessel belonging to their own port; and the same year several cargoes of Irish wheat, oats, malt, and ale were brought to him, and mostly by the merchants of Ireland and in Irish vessels. In 1322, we find Edward II., when preparing to march into Scotland, giving orders for 9000 quarters of wheat and other grain to be sent from Ireland. By the statute 34 Edward III. c. 17, passed in 1360, liberty was given to all merchants and others, whether aliens or natives, to trade freely to and from Ireland, on paying the ancient customs and duties. "At this time," says Macpherson, "there were some considerable manufactures in Ireland. The stuffs called *sayes* made in that country were in such request, that they were imitated by the manufacturers of Catalonia, who were in the practice of making the finest woollen goods of every kind; they were also esteemed in Italy, and were worn by the ladies of Florence, a city abounding with the richest manufactures, and in which

the luxury of dress was carried to the greatest height. The annual revenue derived from Ireland, which amounted to nearly 10,000*l.*, gives a very respectable idea of the balance drawn into that country by its commerce and manufactures, though we know next to nothing of the particular nature of them; unless we suppose a great part of the money to have been drawn from the mines, for which, I believe, there is neither authority nor probability."* This year King Edward understanding, as the record in the *Fœdera* says, that there were various mines of gold and silver in Ireland, which might be very beneficial to himself and the people of that country, had commissioned his ministers there to order a search for the mines, and to do what would be most for his advantage in the matter. The statute 50 Edw. III. c. 8 (A.D. 1376) makes mention of cloth called *frise* as being made in Ireland, and also of cloth manufactured in England from Irish wool.

The denominations and relative values of the different kinds of English Money continued the same in this as in the preceding period. The coinage had been greatly corrupted, partly by clipping, partly by the issue of counterfeits, in the early part of the reign of Henry III.; in consequence of which that king, in the year 1247, called in the old coin, and issued a new penny of a different stamp. In the exchange a deduction of thirteen pence in the pound was made from the nominal value of the old coin, which occasioned great complaints; but the new coin was not depreciated, or made of a less quantity of silver than formerly. The pennies of Henry III. are very common, and there also exist silver halfpence and farthings of his coinage. All the money was now made round. It is also said that, in 1257, Henry issued a gold coin of the weight of two silver pennies, which was ordered to pass for twenty pennies of silver. It was however soon recalled, on the complaint of the citizens of London that gold was rated above its value, in being thus made equal to ten times its weight in silver; and no spe-

* Macpherson, i. 562, where the authorities are quoted.

cimens of this earliest English coinage of gold are now known to exist.

Soon after the accession of Edward I. the country was again found to be inundated with base or light money, consisting chiefly of pieces fabricated on the continent, and known, from their impresses, by the names of mitres, lionines, pollards, crockards, rosaries, staldings, steepings, and eagles,—some being imitations of English money, others professing to be foreign coins. Various laws were made both against the importation of this counterfeit money, and against the clipping of the proper coinage of the realm. The severity with which these crimes were visited upon the Jews in particular has been already recorded. Edward himself, however, in the latter part of his reign began the pernicious practice of depreciating the coin by diminishing its legal weight. In 1301 he issued a coinage of pennies, of which 243 (instead of 240, as formerly) were coined out of the pound of silver. In 1279 Edward had issued a new silver coin in imitation of one which had been introduced in France, being of the value of four pennies, and called a gross or groat, that is, a great penny. This coinage of groats seems to have been a small one, but some specimens are still extant.

No coins of Edward II. are certainly known to exist, though it is possible that some of those that have been attributed to his father may be of his coinage; for it was still usual to omit on the legend the numerical distinction of the king's name.

Edward III., in 1344, issued no fewer than six different gold coins,—namely, by one coinage, pieces marked with two leopards to pass for six shillings, others of half that weight and value marked with one leopard, and others marked with a helmet of half the value of the last; and, by a second, nobles of the value of six shillings and eight pence, and halves and quarters of nobles. The second coinage was made necessary by the refusal of the people to take the coins first issued at the value placed upon them. This king also carried the depreciation of the coin much farther than his grandfather had done, by

an issue this same year of silver pennies, of which 266 were made out of the pound. Two years after he coined 270 pennies out of the pound of silver; and in 1351 he issued a new groat to be current at the old rate of four-pence, although it scarcely weighed more than three pennies and a half even of his last diminished money. There are two groats of Edward III., one with the title of King of France, the other without. It is upon his coins also that we first read the motto *Dieu et mon droit* (God and my right), which was originally adopted in allusion to the claim to the French crown. He also coined half groats.

The coins of Richard II., which are nobles, half nobles, quarter nobles, groats, half-groats, pence, and halfpence, are of the same real values with those last coined by his grandfather. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish his silver money, from the want of the numerals, from that of Richard III.

The Scottish money was deteriorated in the course of this period to a still greater extent than the English; the parliament in 1367 having ordered that 352 pennies should be made out of the pound of silver. It is supposed that gold money was first coined in Scotland in the reign of Robert II. (A.D. 1371—1390). There were repeated coinages of money in Ireland; but in 1339 we find a species of coin of inferior quality, and apparently of foreign fabrication, authorised to pass current in that country, on the ground of the insufficient amount of good money. These base pieces were called turneys, or black-money, or sometimes black-mail, from the French word *maille*, anciently used for a piece of money.

Even the legal coins of this period are generally rude in workmanship, and by no means of uniform weight. The standard of weight at this time was scarcely more artificial than that which Henry I. established for measures of length, when he ordered that the ell should be as long as the royal arm. The statute called the Assize of Weights and Measures, which is attributed, in some copies, to the reign of Henry III., in others to that of Edward I., states that, “by consent of the whole realm,

the king's measure was made so that an English penny, which is called the sterling, round without clipping, shall weigh *thirty-two grains of wheat dry in the midst of the ear.*" This is the origin of the weight still called a pennyweight, though it now contains only twenty-four grains. The process of coining was equally rude. First, the metal, as appears from an entry in the Red Book of the Exchequer in the reign of Edward I., "was cast from the melting-pot into long bars; those bars were cut with shears into square pieces of exact weights; then with the tongs and hammer they were forged into a round shape; after which they were blanched, that is, made white or resplendent by nealing or boiling, and afterwards stamped or impressed with a hammer, to make them perfect money. And this kind of hammered money continued through all the succeeding reigns, till the year 1663, when the milled money took place."*

* Leake's Historical Account of English Money, 2nd edit. p. 77.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HENRY IV. TO THE END OF THE
REIGN OF RICHARD III. A.D. 1399—1485.

THE rule of the House of Lancaster, with whatever ultimate benefits it may have been fraught in this as well as in other respects, could not, while it lasted, have proved favourable, on the whole, to the interests of the national industry, productive as it was of long and expensive foreign wars in the first instance, and, as soon as they were ended, of the still more wasteful calamity of domestic discord, bloodshed, and confusion. The reign of the first of the three princes of that house, however, was, after the two or three first years, a time of general tranquillity both at home and abroad ; and during that interval the trade and few manufactures of the country probably flourished as much as at any former period. Henry IV. appears to have felt the importance of protecting and promoting the commerce of his subjects ; or, at all events, the public mind was now so much awake to these objects that he could not afford to disregard them. The history of his government affords many instances of his interference being called for and exerted to open new facilities for the intercourse of the kingdom with other countries, or to obtain redress for injuries which his subjects had sustained in their commercial dealings with foreigners. Thus, in the very first year of his reign, we find him granting letters of marque and reprisal against the Earl of Holland, and issuing orders to his admirals to detain all vessels and property in England belonging to the people of Holland and Zealand, till the earl should take measures to compel the payment of certain debts due by his subjects to English creditors. The same year he summoned the governors of several of the Hanse

Towns and their protector, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, to appear in person or by deputy before his council, to answer the complaints of the merchants of England, that they were not treated in those places so well as the merchants from them were treated in England, notwithstanding the express stipulations of the treaty which secured to the foreign merchants the privileges they enjoyed in this country. This dispute with the famous association of the Hanse Towns, already the most powerful commercial community in Europe, was protracted through a long course of subsequent transactions, which it is unnecessary to detail. The foreign merchants alleged that they had more reason for complaint against the English than the English had against them; that their privileges were infringed upon by the corporations of London and other places; that they were subjected to the grossest impositions by Henry's custom-house officers; and that their ships had been repeatedly attacked and plundered at sea by his subjects. In the end, it seems to have been admitted that these representations were well founded; for it was finally agreed, in 1409, by commissioners appointed on both sides, that all differences should be settled by Henry paying above 30,000 English nobles to the Grand Master and the magistrates of Hamburgh; while the Grand Master, on the other hand, was let off on the payment of only 766 nobles to the English sufferers. A new treaty was then concluded, on the basis of mutual freedom of trade, and oblivion of past injuries. In case of any future outrages, the respective sovereigns bound themselves to make satisfaction for the aggressions of their subjects; failing which, the sovereign of the party injured was to have the right of arresting any subject of the other power found in his dominions within six months after preferring the complaint.* Repeated treaties on the same basis of mutual freedom of intercourse were made in the course of the reign with Castile, Portugal, Flanders, Britany, and other countries. The growing importance of the

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, i. 622.

foreign trade of England at this period is further indicated by the frequent applications which are noticed as having been made to Henry by those of his subjects interested in particular branches of it for their separate incorporation, or, at least, the public recognition of them as associated for a specific object. Thus, in 1404, the English merchants trading to Prussia and the Hanse Towns were empowered to elect a governor, who should exercise a general authority over their body, and in the settlement of disputes between them and foreigners. Three years after, the same privilege was granted to the merchants trading to Holland, Zealand, Brabant, and Flanders; and in 1408, to those trading to Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. These governors of the English merchants, whose functions somewhat resembled those of consuls in modern times, appear usually to have resided in the foreign country to which the merchants resorted. It soon became customary to appoint such a governor for every country with which any commercial intercourse was carried on.

Some very curious notices of the productions and commerce of the principal countries of Europe at the commencement of the fifteenth century are found in the recital given by the Byzantine historian, Laonicus Chalcondyles, of the observations made by Manuel, the unfortunate Emperor of Constantinople, who, in the year 1400, visited Italy, France, England, and other parts of the West, to solicit the aid of the monarchs of Christendom against the Turkish barbarians, now all but masters of the imperial capital itself. The following abstract of so much of the Greek writer's account as belongs to the present subject is presented by the modern Historian of Commerce: "The natives of Germany excel in the mechanic arts, and they boast of the inventions of gunpowder and cannons. Above two hundred free cities in it are governed by their own laws. France contains many flourishing cities, of which Paris, the royal residence, is pre-eminent in wealth and luxury. Flanders is an opulent province, the ports of which are frequented by merchants of our own sea (the Mediterranean) and

the ocean. Britain (or rather England) is full of towns and villages. It has no vines, and but little fruit, but it abounds in corn, honey, and *wool*, *from which the natives make great quantities of cloth*. London, the capital, may be preferred to every city of the West for population, opulence, and luxury. It is seated on the river Thames, which, by the advantage of the tide, daily receives and despatches trading vessels from and to various countries.”*

The establishment of Banks, which now began to take place in various parts of Europe, affords an unquestionable indication of the general extension of commercial transactions. Bills of exchange, as already noted, had been in use from the early part of the thirteenth century ; and, at least by the beginning of the fifteenth, if not earlier, the form in which they were drawn out, and the usages observed respecting their negotiation and non-payment, had come to be nearly the same as at the present day.† Although, however, the origin of the Bank of Venice is carried back to the institution of the *Camera degl' Imprestiti* (or Chamber of Loans), being an office for the payment of the annual interest on the debts of the republic, in 1171, the *Taula de Cambi* (or Table of Exchange) opened at Barcelona, by the magistrates of that city, in 1401, is generally considered to have been the earliest European establishment properly of the nature of what is now called a bank. The Bank of Genoa originated in the establishment, in the year 1407, of the *Chamber of St. George*, which at first, however, was merely an office for the management of the debts of the republic, similar to the Venetian Chamber of Loans.

The false notions on the subject of money to which we had occasion to advert in the preceding Chapter, as hav-

* Macpherson, i. 611. The whole of the information respecting these countries of the West, preserved by Chalcondyles, has been collected and woven into a spirited sketch by Gibbon, Decline and Fall of Rom. Emp. ch. 66.

† Copies are given by Capmany, in his History of Barcelona, of two bills of Exchange, dated in the year 1404, which it is believed are the oldest that have been preserved.

ing given rise in England to so much absurd and mischievous legislation, were not yet corrected by the enlarged commercial experience of the present period. In 1402, we find the parliament enacting, in the spirit of former statutes, that all merchants, whether strangers or denizens, importing commodities from abroad, and selling them in the country for English money, "shall bestow the same money upon other merchandise of England, for to carry the same out of the realm of England, without carrying any gold or silver in coin, plate, or mass, out of the said realm, upon pain of forfeiture of the same, saving always their reasonable costs."* There can be no doubt that the main motive of this and other prohibitions of the same kind was far more to prevent the purely imaginary evil of the export of English money than even to promote the really desirable, however unwise pursued object, of the export of English produce or manufactures. The law, however, entirely failed of its intended effect. The statute of 1402 was confirmed the following year, † with additional provisions for its more effective execution — a fact which is itself sufficient evidence that it had proved useless, or been generally evaded; but this new attempt to compass an impossibility was not more successful than the former; for, in a few months after their enactment, we find the principal part of the recent more stringent regulations abandoned, and declared "utterly void and annulled for ever," as having been seen by the king and his parliament to be "hurtful and prejudicial as well for himself and his realm, as for the said merchants, aliens, and strangers."‡ From other recorded facts, also, it appears that, notwithstanding all these prohibitions, English money constantly found its way to the continent, and was commonly current in every country of Europe. Thus, when Eric, King of Sweden, in 1408, bought the Isle of Gothland, with its great commercial emporium of Wisbuy, from the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, he is stated to have paid for it in

* Stat. 4 Hen. IV. c. 15.

† Stat. 5 Hen. IV. c. 9.

‡ Stat. 6 Hen. IV. c. 4.

English nobles. So, on the settlement, as mentioned above, of the differences with Prussia and the Hanse Towns, in 1409, it was arranged that all the payments on both sides should be made in the same coin, as if it were a common European currency. On another occasion, indeed—the payment of 100,000 English nobles to the Duke of Burgundy, in 1431—it is expressly noted that the money was estimated at its current rate.*

A few years before the commencement of the present period, all export or import of merchandise in any other than English ships had been prohibited, under pain of the forfeiture of vessel and cargo.† Like many of the other mercantile laws of those times, however, this first navigation act passed by the English parliament seems to have been by no means strictly enforced. In the documents relating to the quarrel with the Hanse Towns and Prussia, foreign ships are repeatedly mentioned as being laden with goods which were the property of English merchants, and, apparently, exports from England. Woollen cloth is the article that most frequently occurs; another is wine, which, however, could only be legally exported under the royal licence.

A considerable trade was now carried on with Venice. In 1409 permission was granted by King Henry to the merchants of Venice to bring their carracks, galleys, and other vessels laden with merchandise, into the ports of England and his other dominions, to transact their business, to pass over to Flanders, to return to his dominions, to sell their goods without impediment or molestation from his officers, to load their vessels with wool, cloth, or other English merchandise, and to return to their own country. This licence, which was often renewed, shows us what was the nature of the Venetian trade with England at this time. It was in part what is called a carrying trade, one of its objects being the interchange of the commodities of England and Flanders. The Byzantine

* See these instances quoted with the authorities in Macpherson, i. 619 and 623.

† 5 Rich. II. st. i. c. 3.

historian Chalcondyles has recorded some particulars respecting the commerce of Venice, in relating the visit of the Emperor John Palaeologus to that city in 1438. It is described as excelling all the other cities of Italy in the magnificence of its buildings and the opulence of the inhabitants. According to this account, twenty-two of their largest vessels, under the command of the sons of the nobles, were employed in trading to Alexandria, Syria, Tanais, the British Islands, and Africa. A few years before this time, it was asserted, in a speech addressed by the Doge Tommas Mocenigo to the senate, that the total value of the annual exports from Venice to all parts of the world was not less than ten millions of ducats. The shipping belonging to the citizens of the republic consisted of 3000 vessels, manned by 17,000 seamen; 300 ships, carrying 8000 seamen; and 45 galleys, of different sizes, but carrying, in the whole, 11,000 men, or, on an average, nearly 250 each. In the trade with England the balance was what is called against the republic; the money-payments made to England amounted annually to 100,000 ducats—which was one-fifth of the sum sent every year into Syria and Egypt, the latter being probably very nearly the whole cost price of the oriental productions imported by the republic.*

Henry V. also began his reign by giving evidence of his disposition to favour and encourage commerce. One of his first acts was to confirm the privileges that had been granted by his father and preceding kings to the Venetians, and to other foreign merchants. The splendid illusion of the conquest of France, however, soon drew off his attention from this as well as from all other subjects of domestic interest; and the history of his reign furnishes scarcely a fact worth referring to for our present purpose. It is to be feared, indeed, that the prosperity which had been springing up during several years of peace was now struck with a blight from which it did not

* Macpherson, i. 634, on the authority of Sanuto, *Vite de' Duche di Venezia*, ap. Muratori.

recover for many a day, and that every branch of social industry in the kingdom paid dear for the glory with which Henry's victories crowned the English name. These victories drained the land both of men and of money, and then spread among all classes of the people a spirit of restless and impatient aversion to every peaceful pursuit. Still it appears, from the account of the Treasurer for the year 1421,* that even in this anti-commercial reign the greater part of the public revenue was derived from the trade of the country. Among the new articles of English manufacture, and occasionally, as it would appear, of export, that now appear, may be mentioned both gunpowder and guns. The manufacture and export of guns are mentioned in a licence granted in 1411, for sending two small guns for a ship, along with the king's great gun, to Spain.

The misgovernment and political misfortunes of the greater part of the reign of Henry VI. probably did not oppress and injure the commerce of the kingdom nearly so much as the successful wars of his great father, which, by the very intoxication they produced in the public mind, dried up the spirit of mercantile industry and enterprise, and carried off the whole current of the national feelings and energies in an opposite direction. The loss of France, which was accounted at the time the great calamity and disgrace of the reign, was no loss to the trade of England. Even the weakness of the government did not operate so unfavourably as might be supposed upon that interest, which was now strong enough, if let alone, in a great measure to protect itself, or was, at least, pretty sure of receiving what facilities it needed in the shape of privileges or conventional stipulations from the general feeling of its importance and the mutual wants which bound one country to another. It is remarkable, that in this age a free commerce was not unfrequently continued between two countries even while their governments were at war, and treaties were made between them in contemplation of this state of things.

* Printed in Rymer, x. 113.

The trade between England and Flanders in particular was so indispensable to the people of both countries, that it was never long interrupted by any quarrel between the two governments.

A very curious general review of the commerce of Europe in the earlier part of the fifteenth century is contained in a poem published by Hakluyt, called ‘The Libel of English Policy,’ which appears to have been written in the year 1436 or 1437.* We will extract the most remarkable particulars that have any relation to England, introducing, as we go along, a few notices from other sources. In the first place, it appears, both from this poem and from other evidences, that the English wool of the finest quality was now superior to any produced even in Spain, which had already long been the greatest wool-growing country in Europe. It is stated that, although the Flemings obtained the greater part of their wool from Spain, they could not make good cloth of the Spanish wool by itself, but were obliged to mix it with the English. In Spain itself, in making the finest cloths, the mixture of any other wool with the English was strictly prohibited by a code of laws drawn up about this time by the magistrates of Barcelona, expressly “for the regulation of the manufacture of cloths made of fine English wool.”† The cloths of England, however, were still very inferior in fineness of texture to those both of Spain and the Netherlands; so that the fine English wool was sometimes carried to those countries, there to be manufactured into cloth, which was then sent back to the English market. In the coarser fabrics, on the other hand, the English appear to have already attained considerable excellence; for we find imitations of English cloth soon after this mentioned among the products of the looms of Barcelona.‡ According to the poem, whatever trade England had at this time with Spain was all carried on indirectly through the medium of the great Flemish emporium of Bruges,

* See Macpherson, i. 651.

† Ibid., i. 654.

‡ Capmany, Hist. de Barcelona.

that being the place to which all the Spanish exports were sent in the first instance. These consisted of figs, raisins, bastard wine, dates, liquorice, Seville oil, grain, Castile soap, wax, iron, wool, wadmole, skins of goats and kids, saffron, and quicksilver. With Portugal there was a direct intercourse, which was already considerable —wine, wax, grain, figs, raisins, honey, cordovan, dates, salt, and hides, being among the commodities imported from that country. A direct trade was also carried on with the Genoese, who resorted to England in great carracks, to purchase wool and woollen cloths of all colours, bringing to the country cloth of gold, silks, black pepper, great quantities of woad, wool, oil, wood-ashes, cotton, alum, and gold for paying their balances. Europe was now principally supplied with alum by the Genoese, who had obtained from the Greek emperor, Michael Palæologus, the lease of a mountain on the coast of Asia Minor, containing a mine of that substance, and where a fort which they built became the origin of a town called New Phocæa, after a city which had anciently stood on the same site. Gibbon, however, appears to be mistaken in asserting that the different nations of Europe, and among others the English, resorted to New Phocæa.* The alum was carried by the ships of the Genoese themselves to the ports of England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Arabia, Egypt, and Syria.† In 1450, we find Henry VI. making a purchase of alum to the amount of 4000*l.* from some merchants of Genoa, and afterwards selling it for twice that sum.‡ This transaction curiously illustrates the manner in which trade was at this period carried on by kings. The Genoese merchants were only paid in part by the money which they received, or rather which was promised them; for the bargain was, that their claim was to be discharged by the remission of that amount of custom-duties upon the goods brought and carried away by them: meanwhile, they were licensed by

* Decline and Fall of Rom. Emp. c. lxv.

† See Macpherson, i. 637.

‡ Cotton's Abridgment of the Rolls of Parliament, p. 647.

parliament to export from the south part of England any staple wares whatever, till the debt due to them should be paid. Out of this permission they would, no doubt, contrive amply to reimburse themselves for any sacrifice they may have made in the price at which they had disposed of the alum to the king. Then, on the other hand, to the merchants to whom his purchase was immediately resold by the king for ready money, and at so immense an advance of price, the parliament also gave what was, we may be certain, deemed sufficient compensation, in a grant of the monopoly of the whole trade in the article for the next two years—all persons being prohibited during that period from importing, buying, or selling any other alum. So that the king's profit of 4000*l.* was really extracted out of the pockets of his own subjects, partly in the shape of an imposition upon all consumers of alum, partly by the still more oppressive method of an invasion of the equal rights of all the native importers and exporters of that and every other commodity in which the Genoese traders dealt. The Genoese soon lost their establishment of Phocæa; but in 1459 they found new alum mines in the Isle of Ischia, by means of which they were enabled to continue their former commerce.

The balance of the trade of England with Venice and Florence would seem, according to the author of the ‘*Libel of English Policy*,’ to have been what is called favourable to the Italian communities; that is—contrary, as we have seen, to what other authorities assert to have been the case, at least in so far as Venice was concerned—it left a certain amount of money to be paid every year by England. He complains that these foreigners “bear the gold out of this land, and suck the thrift out of our hand, as the wasp sucketh honey of the bee.” Their imports, which were brought in large galleys, consisted in spiceries and groceries, sweet wines, apes and other foreign animals, and a variety of other articles of luxury. In return for these, besides money, they carried away wool, cloth, and tin, which they were accustomed to travel to Cotswold and other parts of

England to buy up. They sometimes, it is asserted, would buy on credit, and then sell the goods at Bruges, for ready money, five per cent. under what they had cost, for the sake of having the money to lend out at usury during the interval before their payments should become due. It appears, from some expressions of the author, that at this time English merchants also traded to Venice.

The English, according to this writer, bought greater quantities of goods in the marts of Brabant, Flanders, and Zealand, than all other nations together; though these marts or fairs were also frequented by the French, the Germans, the Lombards, the Genoese, the Catalonians, the Spaniards, the Scots, and the Irish. The purchases of the English consisted chiefly of mercery, haberdashery, and groceries; and they were obliged to complete them in a fortnight—a previous space of the same length having been allowed them for the sale of their cloth and other imports. The merchandise of Hainault, France, Burgundy, Cologne, and Cambray, was also brought in carts over-land to the markets of Brabant.

A trade to Iceland for stock-fish had been long carried on from the port of Scarborough; but for about twelve years past a share had been taken in it by Bristol and other ports. The author of the poem, however, states that, at the time when he wrote, the vessels could not obtain full freights. The Danish government in this age repeatedly attempted to prevent the English from trading to the coasts of Iceland.*

A curious fact is mentioned in this poem respecting the people of Britany. The inhabitants of St. Malo especially, it is affirmed, were still accustomed to roam the seas as pirates, very little regarding the authority of their duke, and often made descents upon the eastern coast of England, plundering the country, and exacting contributions or ransoms from the towns.

Among the documents in the *Fœdera* occur various

* See Macpherson, i. 629, 650, 666.

lists of articles ordered to be purchased in England for foreign potentates, or permitted to be exported for their use without paying custom. One of these lists, dated in 1428, enumerates the following articles as then shipped for the use of the King of Portugal and the Countess of Holland. For the king, 6 silver cups, gilded, each of the weight of 6 marks (or 4 pounds); 1 piece of scarlet cloth; 1 piece of sanguine, dyed in grain; 1 piece of blood colour; 2 pieces of mustrevilers; 2 pieces of marble colour; 2 pieces of russet mustrevilers; 2 pieces of black cloth of lyre; 1 piece of white woollen cloth; 300 pieces of Essex straits for liveries; 2000 platters, dishes, saucers, pots, and other vessels, of electrum (some unknown substance—perhaps a kind of crockery); a number of beds of various kinds and sizes, with curtains, &c.; 60 rolls of worsted; 12 dozen of lances; and 26 ambling horses. For the countess, quantities of various woollen cloths; 12 yards of red figured satin; 2 pieces of white kersey; 3 mantles of rabbits' fur; 1½ timber of martens' fur; and a quantity of rye, whole and ground, in casks. All these articles, therefore, were at least to be now purchased in England; but it is probable that almost all of them were also the produce or manufacture of the country.

Another indication of the growing extension of the commerce of the kingdom is furnished by the instances now beginning to be of frequent occurrence of individuals rising to great wealth, and sometimes to rank and power, through the successful pursuit of trade. The most remarkable example of this kind of elevation is that of the De la Poles, successively Earls, Marquises, and Dukes of Suffolk, and eventually ruined by a royal alliance and a prospect of the succession to the crown. The founder of the greatness of this family, which shot so rapidly to so proud a height, and filled for a century so large a space in the history of the country, was a merchant originally of Ravensere (supposed to be the same with Ravenspur, on the east coast of Yorkshire, now obliterated), and afterwards of the neighbouring town of Hull, named William de la Pole, who flourished in the time of Ed-

ward III. He was esteemed the greatest merchant in England, and must have possessed immense wealth for that age, since on one occasion he lent King Edward no less a sum than 18,500*l.* Edward made the opulent merchant the chief baron of his Exchequer, and a knight banneret; and in the course of that and the following reign he was often employed in embassies and in other important affairs of state along with the most distinguished men in the kingdom. His political employments and honours, however, do not appear to have withdrawn him from commerce. His son Michael also began life as a merchant. This was he whom Richard II. created Earl of Suffolk, and made his lord chancellor, but who was soon afterwards driven from office, and deprived of property, rank, and everything except his life, which he saved by taking flight to France, in the sweeping reform of the court by the king's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, and his "wonderful parliament." Michael's son of the same name, however, was recalled, and restored to his father's dignities a year or two before the deposition of Richard: it was his son, also named Michael, who fell in 1415 at the battle of Azincourt. The uncle, again, and heir of this last, William de la Pole, was the celebrated Earl of Suffolk who commanded at the siege of Orleans in 1429, when that place was relieved by Joan of Arc, and who afterwards becomes more conspicuous in the annals of the disastrous reign of the sixth Henry, as the favourite of the queen, Margaret of Anjou, through whose influence he was first created Marquis and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, and made lord chancellor, lord high admiral, and prime minister, or rather dictator of the kingdom—honours, however, which only conducted him after a few years to a bloody death. But this catastrophe did not put an end to the still buoyant fortunes of the family. Soon after the accession of Edward IV., John de la Pole, the son of the late duke, was restored by the Yorkist king to the same place in the first rank of the peerage to which his father had been raised by the House of Lancaster; and this second Duke of Suffolk eventually married the Princess Elizabeth, the

sister of King Edward. Their eldest son John, who had been in 1467 created Earl of Lincoln, was declared by Richard III. his presumptive heir, on the death of his son Edward Prince of Wales in 1484; and a marriage was also arranged at the same time between their daughter Ann and James Duke of Rothsay, afterwards James IV. of Scotland. But the family had now reached the summit of its greatness. In the change of circumstances that followed the overthrow of Richard, the Scottish marriage never took place; and the Earl of Lincoln died in 1487, a few years before his father, without having enjoyed either crown or dukedom. To the latter his younger brother Edmund succeeded, and was the last of the noble house of De la Pole. He was put to death by Henry VII., in 1513—his claim to the crown through his relationship to the House of York being, as is generally believed, the true cause of his destruction. It may be added, that letters as well as commerce were brought near to the crown by the De la Poles, if we may depend upon the common account; for the first Duke of Suffolk married Alice, daughter of Thomas Chaucer, Speaker of the House of Commons, who is believed to have been the son of the poet; and she became the mother of John, the second duke, who married the sister of Edward IV.

One of the greatest of the English merchants in the reign of Henry VI. was William Cannyngham, or Canyngs, of Bristol—a name made familiar to modern readers by the famous forgeries of Chatterton. Two letters of King Henry, addressed in 1449 to the Grand Master of Prussia and the magistrates of Dantzic, recommending to their good offices two factors resident within their jurisdictions of his “beloved and honourable merchant William Cannyngham,” are printed in the *Fœdera*. On Canyngs’s monument in the magnificent church of St. Mary Radcliff, in Bristol, of which he was the founder, it is stated, that on one occasion shipping belonging to him to the amount of 2470 tons was seized by Edward IV., in which were included some vessels of 400, of 500, and even of 900 tons. Canyngs was one of those merchants who took part in the Iceland trade after it was extended beyond

its original seat at Scarborough ; he was probably the first who brought it to Bristol. In 1450 we find permission granted to him by King Henry to employ two ships of whatever burden for two years in the trade to Iceland and Finmark, and to export in them any species of goods not restricted by law to the staple at Calais. This licence became necessary in consequence of the existing law which prohibited all English subjects from trading to Iceland without permission both of their own sovereign and of the King of Denmark.* Canyngs had previously obtained letters from the Danish king, authorising him to load certain vessels with lawful English merchandise for Iceland and Finmark, to take in return fish and other merchandise, and to make as many voyages as he should think proper during a limited term, in order to recover debts due to him in those countries. King Henry's licence is stated to have been granted in consideration of the good services granted to him by Canyngs while mayor of Bristol—an office to which the great merchant was elected by his fellow-citizens no fewer than five times.

Another of the opulent commercial men of this age, who is especially famous in story, is Richard Whytington, the history of whose cat, however, must be held to belong to the region of poetry and fable ; for, instead of being originally a poor scullion-boy, he was the son of Sir William Whytington, knight, as is stated in the ordinances of his college of St. Spirit and St. Mary, yet preserved in the custody of the Mercers' Company of London. Whytington was elected lord mayor of London in 1397 ; again in 1406 ; and a third time in 1419. During his second mayoralty we find him lending Henry IV. the sum of 1000*l.* on the security of the subsidies on wool, hides, and woolfels, while one of the greatest princes of the church, the Bishop of Durham, advanced only 100 marks, and the most opulent of the lay nobility that contributed, no more than 500*l.*† The

* By the stat. 8 Hen. VI. c. 2.

† See the list of subscriptions in Rymer, viii. 488.

above-mentioned college was suppressed in the reign of Edward VI.; but another foundation of Whytington's, his almshouse near Highgate, still remains a monument of the wealth and munificence of this "worthy and notable merchant, the which while he lived had right liberal and large hands to the needy and poor people," to make use of the terms in which he is described by his executors, in the body of rules established by them for the management of the latter charity. Among the subscribers along with Whytington to the loan to Henry IV., are two other London merchants, John Norbury and John Hende, whose opulence appears to have at this time exceeded his; for they advanced the sum of 2000*l.* each. Hende was mayor in 1391 and 1404; and both he and Norbury were the founders of several churches, colleges, and other charitable institutions. Another eminent English merchant and mariner of those times was John Taverner of Hull, who, in a royal licence granted in 1449, is said to have, "by the help of God and some of the king's subjects," built a ship as large as a great carrack (that is, one of the first class of the Venetian traders), or even longer, which the king directed should be called the Carrack Grace Dieu—authorising Taverner at the same time to take on board his carrack wool, tin, lamb-skins, woolfels, passelarges, and other hides, raw or tanned, and any other merchandise, in the ports of London, Southampton, Hull, or Sandwich, and, on paying aliens' duty, to carry them direct to Italy, from which he might bring back bow-staves, wax, and other foreign produce necessary for the country, to the great benefit of the revenue and of the nation.* "The exemption of an English subject," observes Macpherson, "from the law of the staple, in consideration of the extraordinary size of his ship, is a clear proof that no such vessel had hitherto been built in England." Henry V., thirty or forty years before this time, had built some dromons, or large ships of war, at Southampton, such, according to the author of the 'Libel of English Policy,' as were

* Rymer, xi. 258.

never seen in the world before, to match those which his enemies the French had obtained from the Genoese and Castilians. Three of these ships of Henry V. were called the Trinity, the Grace de Dieu, and the Holy Ghost. Another contemporary writer mentions two ships belonging to the fleet with which this king made his second invasion of France—one called the King's Chamber, the other the King's Hall,—both of which were fitted up with extraordinary sumptuousness. That called the King's Chamber, in which Henry himself embarked, is said to have carried a sail of purple silk, with the arms of England and France embroidered on it.

To these instances of commercial opulence in England in the fifteenth century may be added another of a merchant of France of the same era, which is still more remarkable, both in itself, and especially if we take into account the then calamitous circumstances of that country. Mr. Macpherson has drawn up from various sources the following account of Jacques Cœur, “ who, at a time when trade was scarcely known in France, is said to have employed 300 factors to manage his vast commerce, which extended to the Turks and Persians of the East, and the Saracens of Africa ; the most remote nations then known to the merchants of Europe. His exports consisted chiefly of woollen cloths, linens, and paper—then the principal manufactures of France ; and his returns were silks, spiceries, &c. But some say that his dealings were chiefly in gold, silver, and arms. This illustrious merchant was treasurer (*argentier*) to the King of France, and lent him 200,000 crowns ; without which he could not have undertaken the reduction of Normandy. Being sent on an embassy to Lausanne, his enemies took the opportunity of his absence to bring false charges against him ; and the king, regardless of his multiplied services and zealous attachment, abandoned him to their malice. Though nothing could be proved against him, in a trial conducted by his enemies with acknowledged unfairness, he was condemned, the 19th of May, 1453, to the *amende honorable*, to confiscation of all his property, and imprisonment. Having escaped from confinement by

the grateful assistance of one of his clerks, he recovered some part of his property which was in foreign countries ; and, being appointed by the pope to command a division of his fleet, he died in that service at Chio in the year 1456.”*

In this age, both in our own and in other countries, commerce was not only carried on by kings and nobles as well as by the regular merchant, but among the most active traders were some of the higher clergy. In England, indeed, it had long been customary for the greatest dignitaries in the church to engage in mercantile pursuits. Matthew Paris tells us that William of Trumpington, abbot of St. Alban’s, in the reign of Henry III., traded extensively in herrings, for the purchasing of which at the proper season he had agents at Yarmouth, where he had bought a large house for fifty marks, in which he stored the fish till they were sold, “to the inestimable advantage,” says the historian, “as well as honour of his abbey.” Frequent mention is made in those early times of trading-vessels which were the property of bishops and other ecclesiastics of rank. Nor did these eminent persons sometimes disdain to take advantage of very irregular and questionable ways of pursuing their extra-professional gains. One transaction in which two bishops of Iceland figure the Historian of Commerce does not hesitate to designate as a scheme of smuggling. They were in the habit, it seems, of requesting and obtaining licences from Henry VI. for sending English vessels to Iceland on various pretences, which have all the look of being collusive arrangements between them and the owners of the vessels for carrying on an illicit trade.† Iceland, it may be observed, in passing, is stated, at this time, to have possessed neither cloth, wine, ale, corn, nor salt ; almost its only produce seems to have been fish. Licences were often obtained from the English kings by popes, cardinals, and other foreign ecclesiastics, to export wool and other goods without payment of the usual

Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, i. 670.

† *Ibid.*, i. 657 and 662.

duties. The religious persons of all kinds resident in the country were not considered subject to the payment of custom-duties, any more than of almost any other public burdens; and, taking advantage of this privilege, the Cistercian monks had become the greatest wool-merchants in the kingdom, until, in 1344, the parliament interfered, and prohibited them for the future from practising any kind of commerce. The evil, however, of ecclesiastical communities and individuals engaging in trade long continued, in England and elsewhere, to defy the edicts both of the temporal and the spiritual authorities.

Commercial legislation in England in the reign of Henry VI. was still as short-sighted and barbarous as ever, especially on the great subject of national jealousy—the treatment of foreigners. In 1429 a law was passed that no Englishman for the future should sell goods to any foreign merchant except for ready money, or for other goods delivered on the instant.* The penalty for the violation of this enactment was to be the forfeiture of the merchandise. The very next year, however, we find the parliament complaining, that, because of this ordinance, “the English merchants have not sold, nor cannot sell nor utter, their cloths to merchants aliens, whereby the king hath lost his subsidies and customs, which he ought to have had if the said cloths had been sold as they were, and were wont heretofore, and English merchants, clothworkers, and other the king’s liege people, in divers parts of his realm, greatly annoyed and endamaged;” whereupon, at the solicitation of the commons, the late law is so far relaxed as to permit sales at six months’ credit.† Some years after this, the wisdom of the legislature displayed itself in another attempt of a still stranger kind. In 1439 it was ordained that no foreign merchant should sell any goods to another foreigner in England, on pain of the forfeiture of the goods so sold; the reason assigned for this law being, that “great damages and losses daily come to the king and to his people by the buying and selling that the merchants,

* Stat. 8 Hen. VI. c. 24.

† Stat. 9 H n. VI. c. 2.

aliens and strangers, do make at their proper will and liberty, as by such buying and selling, which they use together, of all manner of merchandises, any of them with other, and also by covins and compassings that they do, to impair and abate the price and value of all manner of merchandises of this noble realm, and increase and enhance the price of all their own merchandises, whereby the said merchants aliens be greatly enriched, and the king's subjects, merchants denizens of the same realm, grievously impoverished, and great treasure by the same aliens brought out of this realm, the customs and subsidies by them due to the king greatly diminished, and the navy of the said realm greatly destroyed and hindered."* Happy, says the Roman poet, is the man who is able to tell the causes of things! It is very difficult, however, to understand this parliamentary logic, or to see how either the consequences alleged, or any others of a pernicious sort, could flow from London or any other town in England being made, what Bruges, and Calais, and other continental emporia were, a place to which foreigners of all nations brought the produce of their respective countries for exchange with one another, as well as for the supply of the resident inhabitants. The only effect of prohibiting the former of these two kinds of traffic would be to prevent the foreign merchants from bringing with them so large a quantity of goods as they would otherwise have done.

The calamitous circumstances of the last eight or ten years of the nominal reign of Henry VI.—during the greater part of which period the kingdom was almost without a government, and the land a great battle-field—could not fail to be keenly felt by the tender plant of our rising foreign commerce. Although its growth was checked, however, by the storms with which it had now to contend, it was already too strong to receive more than a temporary injury; and it began to recover its former activity and prosperity as soon as some degree of tranquillity was restored. The reign of Edward IV. is

* Stat. 18 Hen. VI. c. 4.

marked by many commercial treaties with foreign powers, which are to be considered as evidences, not so much of any peculiar attachment to the interests of trade in that prince—although, as we have seen, it was a pursuit which he did not disdain to follow on his own account—as of the importance which it had now acquired in the public estimation, and the manner in which it was consequently enabled to compel attention to its claims. Such treaties were made in 1465 with Denmark; in 1466 with Britany; the same year with Castile; in 1467 with the Netherlands; in 1468 with Britany again; in 1475 with the Hanse Towns; in 1478 with the Netherlands again; in 1482 with the Guipuscoans in Spain, &c. The only one of these conventions that requires particular notice is that with the Hanse Towns, which was concluded at Utrecht, after a great deal of negotiation, by commissioners appointed on both sides. At this time the great trading community of the Hanse comprised nearly seventy cities and towns of Germany, which were divided into the districts, or regions, as they were called, of Lubeck, Cologne, Brunswick, and Dantzig—the city of Lubeck standing at the head of the whole confederacy. Of the factories of the Hanse merchants in foreign countries, four were accounted of chief dignity—namely, those of Novogorod, in Russia; London, in England; Bruges, in Flanders; and Bergen, in Norway. It is probable that, of these, London was the most ancient, as well as the most important.* The Hanse merchants resident in and trading to London had early received important privileges from the English kings, which, however, had commonly been granted only for short terms, and had of late especially been held upon a still more precarious tenure than usual, and even subjected occasionally to curtailment or total suspension. The object of the present treaty was to remedy this state of things, which was found to be fraught with inconvenience to all parties, and to establish the Hanse factories in England upon a foundation of permanent security. It

* Macpherson, Ann. of Com. i. 694.

was agreed that all past injuries or complaints on both sides should be buried in oblivion, and that a full settlement of conflicting claims should be effected by a payment to the Hanse merchants of 10,000*l.* sterling, which they consented to receive in the shape of customs remitted upon their subsequent imports and exports. It was also arranged that the king should appoint two or more judges, who, without any legal formalities, should do justice between the parties in all civil or criminal causes in which the Hanse merchants might be concerned in England; a similar provision being made for the settlement of disputes involving the English residents in the Hanse countries. It is in this treaty, we believe, that the first mention is made of the London Staelhof, or Steelyard, which is described as a court-yard extending to the Teutonic Guildhall. It was not, therefore, as has been generally assumed, the same with the Teutonic Guildhall, although both buildings seem to have eventually come into the possession of the Hanse merchants, if the latter did not originally belong to that confederacy. The Steelyard, by the present treaty, was conveyed to the Hansards by the king in absolute property, as were also a court-yard called by the same name in the town of Boston, and another house in Lynne, they becoming bound to bear all the burdens for pious purposes to which these several buildings were liable by ancient foundation or the bequests of the faithful, and having full power to pull down and rebuild, as they might find convenient. The London Steelyard, or Steel-house, as it was sometimes called, stood between Thames-street and the river, where there is a street still known by the name of Steel-yard-street, a little to the east of Dowgate Wharf. The name seems to have no connexion with steel, but to mean the place where cloths, and perhaps also other goods, were sealed or stamped.

Besides the gain which he made by his own commercial undertakings, Edward IV. obtained large pecuniary supplies at various times in the form of loans from the merchants and mercantile communities both of his own kingdom and of other countries. The amount

of these advances evinces the opulence which was now not unfrequent among the followers of commerce. In the preceding reign, according to the statement in an act of parliament passed in 1449,* the annual revenue derived from the customs at the great staple of Calais, which in the reign of Edward III. had amounted to 68,000*l.*, had then fallen to 12,000*l.*; under which state of things the commons of the land, it is affirmed, were “not enriched by their wools and woolfels and other merchandise, as they were wont to be, the merchants greatly diminished as well in number as in goods, and not of power nor of comfort to buy the wools and woolfels and other merchandises, as they have done of old time, the soldiers of Calais and of the marches there not paid of their wages, and the town of Calais by default of reparation likely to be destroyed.” Within a few years from this date, however, the merchants of Calais were wealthy enough to lend King Edward what was a large amount of money in those days. In 1464 he is stated, in the Rolls of Parliament, to have owed them 32,861*l.*, for payment of which they were assigned a yearly instalment out of the subsidies on wool. He continued, however, to borrow largely in subsequent years; so that in 1468 he was still owing them about 33,000*l.*, a debt which he increased the next year by 10,000*l.*, borrowed of them for payment of a part of his sister’s portion to the Duke of Burgundy. On many other occasions he resorted for pecuniary assistance to the same quarter. Another quarter to which he repeatedly had recourse was that of the famous Medici, the princeely merchants of Florence. Comines assures us that one of the agents of Cosmo de’ Medici was chiefly instrumental in enabling him to mount the throne, by furnishing him at one time with a sum of not less than 120,000 crowns. Florence, we may remark, was now growing rich by the Oriental trade, which had nearly left Genoa, torn as the latter republic was by internal dissensions, as well as deprived of all its possessions in the East by the conquests of the Turks.

* 27 Hen. VI. c. 2.

Some documents, printed by Rymer, relating to an application made to King Edward by some Spanish merchants in 1470, for compensation on account of the loss of several vessels and cargoes which they alleged had been piratically taken from them by the people of Sandwich, Dartmouth, Plymouth, and Jersey, furnish some information respecting the ordinary size of the trading-vessels of those times, and the value both of the ships and their cargoes. The ships in question were laden with iron, wine, wool, raisins, liquorice, spicery, incense, oranges, marfac, and a small quantity of cheese—all the produce of the north of Spain. They were seven in number, of which one, called a carvel,* of 110 tons, valued at 150*l.*, and having wool, iron, &c. on board, to the amount of 2350*l.* more, was bound for Flanders: the cargoes of the others, whose destination was England, were all of much less value. They were, a carvel of 120 tons, valued at 180*l.*, with a cargo valued at 270*l.*; a ship of 120 tons, valued at 110*l.*, with a cargo valued at 190*l.*; a carvel of 110 tons, valued at 140*l.*, with a cargo valued at 240*l.*; a ship of 100 tons, valued at 107*l.* 10*s.*, with a cargo valued at 457*l.* 10*s.*; a ship of 70 tons, valued at 100*l.*, with a cargo valued at 250*l.*; and a carvel of 40 tons, valued at 70*l.*, with a cargo valued at 180*l.*† These statements may be compared with those in the documents contained in a preceding volume of the same collection relating to the dispute with the Hanse Towns, which was at length settled, as mentioned above, by the treaty of 1409. In the latter we find mention made of a Newcastle ship of 200 tons, valued at 400*l.*; of a cog belonging to Hull, which, with its cargo of cloth, was valued at 200*l.*; of another, laden with oil, wax, and werke (?), valued at 300*l.*; of a barge belonging to Falmouth, laden with salt and canvass of Britany, valued at 333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; of another Yarmouth vessel, laden with salt, cloth, and salmon, valued at 40*l.*; of four vessels

* Carvel, or Caravel, from the Spanish *Caravela*, is explained by Johnson to be a kind of ship, with a square poop, formerly used in Spain.

† *Fœdera*, xi. 671, 672.

belonging to Lynne, carrying cloth to the value of 362*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.*, besides wine and other goods; and of a crayer* belonging to Lynne, laden with osmunds and other goods to the value of 64*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.* Towards the close of the reign of Edward IV., it appears, from the orders issued for the manning of the fleet on the breaking out of the war with Scotland in 1481, the crown was possessed of no fewer than six ships of its own; which was probably the greatest royal navy that had existed in England since the reign of William the Conqueror.

The foreign trade of the country, as one of its most important interests, occupied much of the attention of the parliament called together by Richard III., in the first year of his reign. Of the fifteen acts passed by it, seven relate to commerce and manufactures. The subject of the first was chiefly the fabrication and dyeing of woollen cloths; and the preamble states that it had been customary for the foreign merchants in their purchases of wool, to procure it sorted and picked, and to leave the locks and other refuse—by reason of which, it is added, there had come to be no manufacture of fine drapery in England. To remedy this evil, it was provided that, for the future, no wool should be sold to strangers cleaned from the locks or refuse, or in any other state than as it was shorn†—an enactment conceived in the spirit of the very infancy and rudest barbarism of commercial legislation. The next chapter of the statute, entitled ‘An Act touching the Merchants of Italy,’ is very interesting for the information which it incidentally furnishes respecting the trade then carried on in this country by foreign merchants. The preamble represents, that mer-

* Crayer, Crare, or Cray, a small sea-vessel, from the Old French, *Craier*.

“ O Melancholy !”

says Belarius, in ‘Cymbeline,’—

“ Whoever yet could sound thy bottom ? find
The ooze to show what coast thy sluggish crare
Might easiest harbour in !”

† 1 Richard III. c. 8.

chant strangers of the nation of Italy—under which name are included not only the Venetians, Genoese, Florentines, Apulians, Sicilians, and Lucaners, or people of Lucca, but also the Catalonians “and other of the same nation,” according to the fashion of speaking in that age, which was to consider all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean as belonging to Italy,—were resident in great numbers both in London and in other cities of England, and were in the habit of taking warehouses and cellars in which to store the wares and merchandises they imported, “and them in their said warehouses and cellars deceivably pack, meddle (mix), and keep unto the time the prices thereof been greatly enhanced, for their most lucre, and the same wares and merchandises then sell to all manner of people, as well within the ports whereunto they bring their said wares and merchandise, as in other divers and many places generally within this realm, as well by retail as otherwise.” An extensive and active internal trade, therefore, was carried on by these foreign residents: it is probable, indeed, that, besides their business as importers and exporters, the greater part of the domestic sale of commodities brought from beyond seas was in their hands. This is the second condition in the natural commercial progress of a country; first, its poverty and barbarism invite only the occasional resort of foreigners, without offering any temptation to them to take up their residence within it; then, as its wealth increases, foreigners find even its home trade an object worth their attention, and one which they easily secure by the application of their superior skill and resources; lastly, in the height of its civilization, and when the energies of its inhabitants have been fully developed—in a great measure by the impulse received from these stranger residents—its traffic of all kinds, as well as all the other business carried on in it, naturally falls into the almost exclusive possession of its own people. England, then, at the end of the fifteenth century, was only yet making its way through the intermediate or transition stage in this advance from having no commerce at all to having a com-

merce properly its own. The act goes on to recite, that the foreign merchants not only traded in the manner that has been described in the goods imported by themselves from abroad, but also bought, in the ports where they were established and elsewhere, at their free will, the various commodities which were the produce of this realm, and sold them again at their pleasure within the country, as generally and freely as any of the king's subjects. "And the same merchants of Italy and other merchants strangers," it is added, "be hosts, and take unto them people of other nations to sojourn with them, and daily buy and sell, and make many privy and secret contracts and bargains with the same people." They are farther specially charged with buying up in divers places within the realm great quantities of wool, woollen cloth, and other merchandises, part of which they sold again both to natives and aliens, as they found it most for their profit, delivering a great part of the wool to clothiers, to make into cloth "after their pleasures." "Moreover, most dread sovereign lord," continues the recital, "artificers and other strangers, not born within your obeisance, daily resort and repair unto your said city of London, and other cities, boroughs, and towns of your said realm, in great number, and more than they have used to do in days past, and inhabit themself within your said realm, with their wives, children, and household, and will not take upon them any laborious occupation, as carting and ploughing, and other like business, but use making of cloth and other handicrafts and easy occupations, and bring and convey from the parts of beyond the sea great substance of wares and merchandises unto fairs and markets, and all other places of your realm, at their pleasure, and there sell the same as well by retail as otherwise, as freely as any of your said subjects useth for to do, to the great hurt and impoverishing of your said subjects, and in nowise will suffer nor take any of your subjects to work with them, but only take into their service people born in their own countries, whereby your said subjects for lack of occupation fall to idleness, and been thieves, beggars,

vagabonds, and people of vicious living, to the great trouble of your highness and of all your said realm." We need not transcribe the enacting part of the statute; its historical interest, and its value for our present purpose, lie in the above preamble, which furnishes so full and clear an account of the manner in which the commerce of the country was at this time conducted. The evils, or supposed evils, so strongly complained of, were of course attempted to be remedied by all sorts of restrictions on the operations of the foreign dealers—restrictions which were one and all absurd and of mischievous tendency, as well as, fortunately, in their very nature of impracticable enforcement. Their almost avowed object was to check the importation of foreign commodities of all kinds. While shackles, however, are imposed upon the trade in all other commodities, it is interesting to find an exception made in favour of the new-born trade in books, the creation of the great art recently invented of growing them as it were in crops, even as the manifold produce of the corn-fields is raised from the scattered seed. "Provided always," the statute concludes, "that this act, or any part thereof, or any other act made or to be made in this present parliament, in no wise extend or be prejudicial, any let, hurt, or impediment to any artificer or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be, or shall be of, for bringing into this realm, or selling by retail or otherwise, of any manner books written or imprinted, or for the inhabiting within the said realm for the same intent, or to any writer, limner, binder, or imprinter of such books as he hath, or shall have, to sell by way of merchandise, or for their abode in the same realm, for the exercising of the said occupations, this act or any part thereof notwithstanding."*

Two other acts of this parliament continue for ten years longer prohibitions passed in the preceding reign against the importation of a great number of foreign manufactured articles. Intervening between these non-importa-

tion acts is another of a directly opposite character, ordaining that, for the future, along with every butt of either Malvesy (Malmesey) or Tyre wine brought to the country by the Venetians or others should be imported ten good and able bowstaves. Formerly, it is alleged, bowstaves used to be sold at 40*s.* the hundred, or 46*s. 8d.* at most; but now, by the seditious confederacy of the Lombards trading to this country, they had risen to the “outrageous price” of 8*l.* the hundred.* This, it may be observed, was the second attempt that had been made to remedy the grievance in question. The way in which it was first attacked was more direct. In 1482 it was ordained that, whereas the bowyers in every part of the realm sold their bows “at such a great and excessive price, that the king’s subjects properly disposed to shoot be not of power to buy to them bows;” therefore, from the feast of Easter next coming, no Bowman should take from any of the king’s liege people for a long bow of yew more than 3*s. 4d.*† This was certainly carrying faith in the virtue of an act of parliament as far as it could well go.

Here, then, were two legislative modes of keeping down prices. The last of the acts of Richard’s parliament which it remains for us to notice furnishes an example of a third. The evil against which this act is directed is the high price of Malmesey wine—a public calamity which is both pathetically and indignantly bewailed. Butts of wine called Malvesy, it is affirmed, were wont in great plenty to be brought into this realm to be sold “before the 27th and 28th years of the reign of Henry IV., late in deed and not of right king of England, and also in the same years;” at which time they held from 140 to 126 gallons a piece; “and then a man might buy and have of the merchant stranger, seller of the said Malveseys, by mean of the said plenty of them, for 50*s.*, or 53*s. 4d.* at the most, a butt of such wine, he taking for his payment thereof two parts in woollen cloth wrought in this realm, and the third part

* 1 Rich. III. c. 11.

† 22 Edw. IV. c. 4.

in ready money." But now, the act proceeds to complain, the dealers in these wines have, "by subtle and crafty means," so contrived it that the butts of Malmesey lately imported scarcely hold 108 gallons; "and besides," it is added, "they knowing, as it seemeth, what quantity of such wine may serve yearly to be sold within this realm, where they were wont to bring hither yearly great quantity and plenteously of such wine to be sold after the prices aforesaid, of their craftiness use to bring no more hither now in late days but only as will scantily serve this realm a year, wherethrough they have enhanced the price of the same wines to eight marks (*5l. 6s. 8d.*) a butt, *ready money, and no cloth*, to the great enriching of themself, and great deceit, loss, hurt, and damage of all the commons of this realm." The plan adopted for reformation of this inconvenience was simply to ordain that the butt of Malmesey should be again of the old measure. It seems to have been thought that the old measure was the cause of the old price, and that, the one being restored, the other would follow of course.

Little, it is plain, can be said in commendation of the enlightened wisdom of any part of this system of commercial policy. The various facts and statements that have been quoted, however, all go to attest the actual commercial advancement of the country in despite of vicious legislation. The subject of trade is seen filling a constantly enlarging space in the public eye; and even the misdirected efforts of the law show how strongly and generally men's minds were now set upon the cultivation of that great field of national industry.

In Scotland also, as well as in England, the manufactures and commerce of the country appear, on the whole, to have made considerable advances in the course of the fifteenth century. It is recorded that the English vice-admiral, Sir Robert Umfraville, in an expedition upon which he sailed to the Frith of Forth in 1410, besides plundering the country on both coasts of that arm of the sea, carried off as prizes fourteen "good ships" laden with woollen and linen cloth, pitch, tar, woad, meal, wheat,

and rye, in addition to many which he burned.* This shows that even in the earlier part of the present period Scotland was by no means destitute of trade and shipping. Some of the vessels taken by Umfraville, however, might belong to foreigners ; the Lombards, in particular, according to Fordun, already carried on a considerable Scottish trade, and some of the ships in which they resorted to the country were of large burden. The usual staple of the Scottish continental commerce was at Bruges, in Flanders. James I., in 1425, removed it to Middleburgh, in Zealand ; but, on an embassy arriving the same year from the Flemings, with concessions on some points as to which the Scottish merchants had felt aggrieved, he agreed to restore the former arrangement. In ‘The Libel of English Policy,’ however, written nearly twenty years after this, we are informed that the exports of Scotland then consisted only of wool, woolfels, and hides. The Scottish wool, it is added, used to be mixed with the English, and manufactured into cloth, at the towns of Popering and Bell, in Flanders. It seems to have been exported to Flanders in Scottish vessels, which returned home with cargoes of mercery, haberdashery, and other manufactured goods of various kinds, among which are specified cart-wheels and barrows. But the most ample information respecting the commerce and manufactures of Scotland during this period is supplied, as in England, by the statute-book. A long succession of enactments relating to this subject commences from the return of James I., in 1424 ; from which date, it is worthy of remark, the Scottish laws, which had been hitherto in Latin, are written, with a very few exceptions, in the language of the country—an improvement which was not adopted in England till more than sixty years afterwards. We can here, however, only notice, in their chronological order, a few of the more remarkable particulars to be collected from this source. In 1425 it was, among other things, ordained that the merchants returning from foreign countries should always bring back, as part of their returns,

* Stow.

harness (or defensive armour), spears, shafts, bows, and staves. The same parliament also passed a law for establishing a uniformity of weights and measures. From a law of 1428, permitting merchants, for a year ensuing, to ship their goods in foreign vessels where Scottish ones were not to be found, it would appear that a Scottish navigation act existed before this time, although no record of it has been preserved. In 1430, a law was passed to which the epithet of anti-commercial may be applied, ordaining, that cloths made of silk, or adorned with the finer furs, should not be worn by any person under the rank of a knight, or whose annual income was less than 200 marks. This proves, however, that these expensive kinds of dress were then well known in the country, and were even in use among those who did not belong to the wealthiest classes. This same year King James imported from London for his own use the following articles — which it may therefore be presumed he could not procure at home so readily or of so good a quality :—20 tuns of wine ; 12 bows ; 4 dozen yards of cloth of different colours ; 12 yards of scarlet ; 20 yards of red worsted ; 8 dozen pewter vessels ; 1200 wooden bowls, packed in four barrels ; 3 dozen coverels, a basin, and font ; 2 summer saddles, 1 hackney saddle, a woman's saddle with furniture ; 2 portmanteaus ; 4 yards of motley ; 5 yards of morrey ; 5 yards of black cloth of lyre ; 12 yards of kersey ; and 12 skins of red leather. These goods were shipped for Scotland in a vessel belonging to London, accompanied by an order of King Henry, securing them from molestation by English cruizers.* In 1435 we find James purchasing 30 fodders of lead from the Bishop of Durham ; for the export of which, either by land or water, on payment of the usual customs, an order was granted by the English council. A law of the Scottish parliament in 1424 had declared all mines to belong to the crown that yielded three halfpennies of silver in the pound of lead ; and Mr. Maepherson thinks that the import of lead from England probably became necessary in

* Rymer, x. 470.

consequence of the check which this enactment put upon the operations of mining. A scarcity of the precious metals also seems to have been about this time felt, if we may judge by a law of the year 1436, which enacted that the exporters of native produce should give security to bring home, and deliver to the master of the mint, a certain quantity of bullion for every sack of wool, last of hides, or measure of other goods which they carried abroad.

One of the most eminent of the Scottish merchants of this age was William Elphinstone, who is regarded as the founder of the commerce of Glasgow, as his son Bishop Elphinstone, towards the close of the century, was of the University of Aberdeen. Elphinstone's trade is supposed to have consisted in exporting pickled salmon. Two Scottish merchants, George Faulau and John Dalrymple, repeatedly appear soon after this as employed by James II., in embassies and other public business, along with noblemen and clergymen. A law was passed in 1458, prohibiting any person from going abroad as a merchant, unless, besides being a person of good credit, he either possessed or had consigned to him property to the amount of three serplaiths—the serplaith being, according to the common account, eighty stones of wool. Merchants were at the same time forbidden to wear silk, scarlet, or fur of martens, unless they were aldermen, bailies, or in some other capacity members of a town council. The social estimation in which commercial men were at this time held in Scotland may in some degree be gathered from another clause of the act, which commands that poor gentlemen living in the country, having estates of more than 40*l.* a-year of old extent, should dress as merchants. The dress of the wives of merchants, as well as their own, was regulated by this statute: they are directed to take especial care to make their wives and daughters be habited in a manner correspondent to their estate; that is to say, on their heads short eurches, with little hoods, such as are used in Flanders, England, and other countries; and gowns without tails of unbefitting length, or trimmed with furs, except on holidays. Further, as if it had been

intended to discriminate the several ranks of the community by so many different colours, like the enchanted fish in the Eastern tale, while merchants were prohibited from wearing scarlet, all hues except grey or white were interdicted to labourers on working days, and on holidays all except red, green, or light blue. So much may serve for sample sufficient of this fantastic piece of legislation. Meanwhile, the growth of the trade of the country is indicated by occasional notices of commercial treaties with foreign governments,—with England, with Denmark, with Flanders, and other continental states. In 1467 various new restrictions were imposed, with what view it is not easy to imagine, upon the pursuit of foreign commerce. It was ordained that no persons should go abroad as merchants except free burgesses, resident within burgh, or their factors and servants; and that even no burgess should have that liberty unless he was “a famous and worshipful man,” having at the least half a last of goods in property or trust. Handicraftsmen or artisans, in particular, were debarred from engaging in trade unless they obtained special licences, and renounced their crafts without colour or dissimulation. These prohibitions look very much as if they had been obtained by the influence of the mercantile body, wishing to preserve the monopoly of the foreign trade in their own hands. By another regulation all vessels were prohibited from sailing to any foreign country between the end of October and the beginning of February. Rochelle, Bordeaux, and the ports of France and Norway, are all mentioned in this act as places to which the Scottish merchants were then accustomed to resort. The regulation requiring every merchant to be a burgess made an exception in favour of the nobility and clergy, who were permitted to export their own goods, and import what they had occasion for, by the agency of their servants. In Scotland as well as in England many, both of the nobility and the bishops, had long been accustomed openly to pursue trade as a source of gain. In the beginning of this century, for instance, mention is made of a vessel carrying two supercargoes and a crew of twenty men, which was freighted by the

Earl of Douglas to trade with Normandy and Rochelle, and of another navigated by a master and twenty-four sailors, and laden with six hundred quarters of malt, of which the Duke of Albany was proprietor.* In 1404 a richly-laden vessel, belonging to Wardlaw, Bishop of St. Andrew's, was taken by the English. In 1473 another, called the Salvator, the property of his successor, Bishop Kennedy, being the finest vessel that had ever been built in Scotland, was wrecked at Bamborough, when the cargo was plundered, and the crew made prisoners by the people of the country,—an outrage for which redress was soon after demanded by the Scottish parliament, and which it was finally agreed should be compensated by the King of England paying the merchants to whom the goods belonged a composition of five hundred marks.

Very few notices respecting the trade of Ireland occur during this period. The exports from that country, according to the author of the ‘Libel of English Policy,’ were hides, wool, salmon, hake (a kind of fish), herrings, linen, falding (a kind of coarse cloth), and the skins of martens, harts, otters, squirrels, hares, rabbits, sheep, lambs, foxes, and kids. Some gold ore had also lately been brought thence to London. The abundant fertility and excellent harbours of Ireland are celebrated by this writer.

In connexion with the subject of trade and commerce it may be mentioned, that to the close of this period we owe the first establishment in England of public posts for the conveyance of intelligence. The plan was first carried into effect in France by Louis XI., about the year 1476, and was introduced in England by the Duke of Gloucester (afterwards Richard III.), while conducting the Scottish war in 1481. By means of post-horses changed at every twenty miles, letters, we are told, were forwarded at the rate of a hundred miles a day. Both in France and in England, however, the post in this, its earliest form, was exclusively for the use of the government.

The English coins of this period were, with one excep-

* See Tytler, Hist. of Scotland, iii. 238.

tion, to be presently noticed, gold and silver pieces of the same denominations that have been already described. Although, however, the names, and also the relative values, of the coins continued unchanged, their positive values, or the actual quantities of metal of which they were formed, underwent a succession of diminutions. It has been stated that, whereas, originally, 240 pennies were coined out of the Tower pound of silver, weighing 5400 grains troy, Edward III. coined out of the same quantity of silver 270 pennies; thus reducing the quantity of silver in each penny from $22\frac{1}{2}$ to 20 grains. The effect of this would be to depreciate the penny by the amount of about one-third of a farthing, and the nominal pound (which was still held to contain 20 shillings, or 240 pence) by about 6s. 6d. in our present money; thus reducing it from about 56s. 3d. to somewhat less than 50s. The groats, or fourpenny pieces, afterwards issued by Edward III., carried the depreciation still farther than this; each of these coins weighing only 72 grains instead of 90, which they ought to have done according to the original scale, or 80, which even the lately reduced rate would have demanded. A shilling paid in these groats was worth only about 2s. 3d. of our present money, instead of about 2s. $9\frac{1}{2}d.$, its original value; and a pound paid in the same coin was only about 46 of our present shillings.

Such, then, were the values of the several silver coins at the accession of Henry IV. That king, in 1412, depreciated the currency still more by coining the Tower pound into 30 shillings by tale—that is to say, into 360 pennies; the effect of which was to reduce the amount of silver in each penny to 15 grains, and the value of the penny to not quite 2d., of the shilling to about 1s. $10\frac{1}{2}d.$, and of the pound to 1l. 17s. 9d. of our present money. The strange reason assigned for this alteration was “the great scarcity of money in the realm,”—as if money, or anything else of intrinsic value, could be made more plentiful by the easy process of cutting each piece into two. The ordinance, which stands on the rolls of parliament, however, betrays a consciousness that the ingenious expedient was not likely to succeed. The new mode of coin-

age was directed to be tried only for two years ; and if, at the end of that time, it should be found against the profit of the king and his realm, then to cease. It must, in fact, even then have been plain to all the world that the measure, the evil effects of which had already been repeatedly experienced, was nothing else than a robbery of the public for the benefit of the royal exchequer. Even to the crown, indeed, the benefit was only temporary ; but this deeper truth may not have been so clearly perceived. In the first instance, of course, and for the moment, the base coinage was profitable to the utterer. The different pieces coined by Henry IV. were halfpennies, pennies, and groats of silver, and nobles, half nobles, and quarter nobles of gold. In the last year of his reign he reduced the quantity of gold in the noble from its original amount of 120 grains to 108 grains ; in other words, he diminished its intrinsic value by one-tenth. Henry's gold coins exactly resemble those of his predecessor, the only difference being the substitution of the name HENRICUS for RICHARDUS. His silver coins are also principally distinguished by the name.

The values of the several denominations of English money continued without further reduction during the two next reigns. The silver coins of Henry V. are supposed to be distinguished from those of his father by two little circles on each side of the head, which are thought to have been intended for eylet-holes,—“ from an odd stratagem,” says Leake, “ when he was prince, whereby he recovered his father’s favour, being then dressed in a suit full of eylet-holes : from that time may likewise be dated his extraordinary change of manners, which proved so much to the honour of himself and the kingdom, and therefore not an improper distinction of the money of this prince from the others of the same name.”* The story in question, which is told at great length by Holinshed, Speed, Stow, and other chroniclers of that age, is, briefly, that, when the worst suspicions of the conduct of his son had been infused into the mind of Henry IV., the prince

* Leake’s Historical Account of English Money, p. 139.

regained his father's favour by appearing before him, and offering the king his dagger, that he might, if he pleased, take his life on the spot. On this occasion, it seems, "he was appareled in a gown of blue satin, full of small eylet-holes, at every hole the needle hanging by a silk thread with which it was sewed : about his arm he ware a hound's collar set full of S S of gold, and the tirets likewise being of the same metal." * But what particular part in the stratagem this fantastic dress was intended to play does not appear. The story looks at the best as if we had got only the half of it ; but it is probably altogether an invention of a later age, and, instead of having been the origin of the eylet-holes on the coin, it is most likely itself the offspring of that device. Henry V. also struck various French coins, among which were muttons (so called from bearing the impression of a lamb, or Agnus Dei) of gold, and groats, half groats, quarter groats, mançois, and petit deniers, of silver. After the treaty of Troyes he coined others called saluts, demi-saluts, blances, &c., in the legend of which he took the title of Hæres Franciæ, or Heir of France.

The English coins of Henry VI. are supposed to be distinguished from his father's by the arched crown called the imperial, surmounted with the orb and cross. He also issued, as King of France, saluts, angelots, franks, and nobles of gold, and groats, blanks, deniers, &c., of silver.

The English money was again depreciated by Edward IV., who, in 1464, ordered the Tower pound of silver to be coined into 37*s.* 6*d.* by tale, that is, into 450 pennies. The penny now, therefore, contained only 12 grains of silver, and its value was little more than 1½*d.* of our present money ; that of the shilling was about 1*s.* 6*d.* ; and that of the nominal pound about 30*s.* Edward IV., in 1466, also struck two new gold coins, called angels and angelots, from the figure of an angel on the reverse. These were intended as substitutes for the noble and the half noble, and were, like them, ordered to pass respect-

* Holinshed.

ively for 6*s.* 8*d.* and 3*s.* 4*d.*; but they were considerably inferior in intrinsic value even to the nobles that had been struck since the last year of the reign of Henry IV.; for, instead of 108 grains, the angel contained only 80 grains. It was, therefore, really worth little more than three-fourths of the late noble, or exactly two-thirds of the original coin of that name. Henry VI. also, during his short restoration to power in 1470, coined angels of gold, and groats and half groats of silver, all after the depreciated standards that had been established by Edward IV. It is not probable that Edward V. coined any money. The gold coins of Richard III. were angels and half angels, of the same weight as his brother's, and bearing Richard's cognizance of a boar's head; his silver money is distinguished from that of Richard II. by being a third lighter.

The depreciation of the coin in Scotland during the present period proceeded much more rapidly, and was carried to a much greater extent, than in England. When James I. returned home, in 1424, he found the real value of the Scottish money very considerably less than that of the English of the same denominations; on which he immediately got an act of parliament passed for restoring the coin to the same weight and fineness with that of England; but it proved of no effect,—the depreciation was carried farther and farther, till at length, at the close of the present period, the Scottish coins were scarcely more than one-fourth of the weight of the English. The pound of silver, which had been originally coined, as in England, into 20 shillings, was coined in 1424 into 37*s.* 6*d.*; in 1451 into 64*s.*; in 1456 into 96*s.*; and in 1475 into 144*s.* The value of the Scottish shilling at this last-mentioned date, therefore, was little more than 4½*d.* of our present money. We shall find, however, that it afterwards declined to a much lower point than this.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HENRY VII. TO THE END OF THE
REIGN OF ELIZABETH. A.D. 1485—1603.

THE present period was an age of great revolutions and remarkable progress in the commerce and general industry, not only of this country, but of the world. But in England especially the sixteenth century is distinguished from the fifteenth almost as the day is from the night, in respect to the activity and advancement of the nation in every field of exertion and enterprise where those accumulated results are to be achieved that constitute civilization.

The encouragement of the trade of the kingdom, being an object in which he saw much profit to himself as well as to his subjects, engaged much of the attention of Henry VII. during his whole reign. It cannot, however, be said that this sagacious king was much beyond his age in some of the notions on which he proceeded in this matter. His general views may be considered to be explained in the speech which his minister, Cardinal Morton, addressed, as Lord Chancellor, to the parliament which met in November, 1487. After having expressed his majesty's anxious desire to restore peace and order to his kingdom by good and wholesome laws,—by which alone, he observed, sedition and rebellion were to be truly put down, and not by the blood shed in the field or by the marshal's sword,—the eloquent chancellor went on;—“ And, because it is the king's desire that this peace, wherein he hopeth to govern and maintain you, do not bear only unto you leaves for you to sit under the shade of them in safety, but also should bear you fruit of riches, wealth, and plenty, therefore his

grace prays you to take into consideration matter of trade, as also the manufactures of the kingdom, and to repress the bastard and barren employment of moneys to usury and unlawful exchanges, that they may be, as their natural use is, turned upon commerce and lawful and royal trading.” That is to say, commerce was to be promoted by the destruction of credit; for a chief branch of commercial credit is the lending and borrowing of money on interest, which is what is here called usury. The next of the cardinal’s recommendations also partook of the twilight views of the time,—a twilight, however, which the space of three centuries and a half that has since elapsed has not wholly dissipated. After calling upon them to take measures that the “people be set on work in arts and handicrafts, that the realm may subsist more of itself; that idleness be avoided, and the draining out of our treasure for foreign manufactures stopped;” he continued:—“ But you are not to rest here only, but to provide further that whatsoever merchandise shall be brought in from beyond the seas may be employed upon the commodities of this land, whereby the kingdom’s stock of treasure may be sure to be kept from being diminished by any overtrading of the foreigner.” So that the old system of encouraging foreign trade by shutting out foreign merchants and foreign commodities was still the only plan that was thought of, and the sole end and design of all commercial intercourse with other nations was held to be, to take produce and manufactures out of the country and to bring gold into it.

The conclusion of the chancellor’s oration is worth quoting for its curious argument, intended to prove how the country would enrich itself by making the king as rich as possible. “ And, lastly,” said Morton, “ because the king is well assured that you would not have him poor that wishes you rich, he doubteth but that you will have care as well to maintain his revenues of customs and all other natures, as also to supply him with your loving aids, if the case shall so require. The rather for that you know the king is a good husband, and *but a steward, in effect, for the public; and that what comes*

*from you is but as moisture drawn from the earth, which gathers into a cloud, and falls back upon the earth again.”** All this, too, however (only substituting the government for the king, who in that age was the whole government), is still the faith of many people in our own day, when the spark of truth that lies in the heart of the error, and has kept it so long alive, is hardly so considerable a particle as it was in the circumstances in which Cardinal Morton propounded his ingenious metaphor. The economical evil of a large diversion of the public wealth into the hands of the government is not that the money so paid over is absorbed or lost to the public, as if it were buried in the ground or thrown into the sea ; in so far at least as it is expended in the country, which nearly all of it usually is, it does undoubtedly descend again to the sources from which it was drawn, as the moisture that rises from the earth in vapour falls back upon it in showers. The objection is, not that any part of it is absolutely lost to the country, but that, as expended by the government, it is not expended so advantageously for the interests of industry and production as it would have been if it had been left in the pockets of the people. There is nothing lost ; but there is not so much gained in the one case as there would have been in the other. The reproduction is less ; the accumulation of the capital of the community does not go on so fast. However, there may perhaps be a state of circumstances in which it is for the general advantage that a portion of the public wealth should be impelled by force in a certain direction, for the sake of forming and maintaining somewhere a larger reservoir of capital than would otherwise anywhere exist : the general rule may be that capital should be allowed to diffuse itself freely, because in that way the increase will, upon the whole, be the largest ; but there may be an exception for the case of an early society, which would labour under the disadvantage of having no capital but what was distributed in driblets unless some system of artificial drainage were put in

* Bacon’s Henry VII.

action to collect a number of the puny rivulets into one efficient stream. Even the rapacity of a king or a government, whatever counterbalancing evils it may be attended with, may in some sort answer this purpose ; and Cardinal Morton's metaphoric logic, therefore, though not the whole truth, in regard to Henry VII. with his riches being but a cloud made for the refreshment of his people, was not perhaps without a smack of reason as well as of poetry.

Agreeably to the spirit of one of the chancellor's commercial principles, the parliament now passed an act against usury (3 Henry VII. c. 6), that is, against all lending of money on interest, and took much pains to provide against the various ways in which attempts were likely to be made to evade the prohibition. The punishment for offenders was the annulment of the usurious bargain, and a fine of a hundred pounds—"reserving to the church," it was added, "this punishment notwithstanding, the correction of their souls according to the laws of the same." The objection to usury was in its origin purely a religious feeling, derived from the general antipathy to the Jews, the great money-dealers of the middle ages.

In another of the acts of the parliament of 1487-8, passed for annulling an ordinance of the lord mayor and aldermen of London, prohibiting any of the citizens from resorting with their goods to any fair or market out of the city, there occurs incidentally an enumeration of the principal places where fairs were then held throughout the country, and also of the articles sold at them. The London ordinances, if allowed to stand good, the Commons represent to his Majesty, " shall be to the utter destruction of all other fairs and markets within this your realm, which God defend [forbid] ; for there be many fairs for the common weal of your said liege people, as at Salisbury, Bristow, Oxenforth, Cambridge, Nottingham, Ely, Coventry, and at many other places, where lords spiritual and temporal, abbots, priors, knights, squires, gentlemen, and your said commons of every country, hath their common resort to buy and purvey many things

that be good and profitable, as ornaments of holy church, chalices, books, vestments, and other ornaments for holy church aforesaid; and also for household, as victual for the time of Lent, and other stuff, as linen cloth, woollen cloth, brass, pewter, bedding, osmund, iron, flax, and wax, and many other necessary things, the which might not be forborene among your liege people." At this time most purchases, except of articles of daily consumption, were probably made at these markets periodically held in the great towns. The act attests the commercial pre-eminence which London had now acquired, the country markets, it appears, being principally dependent for their supplies upon the resort to them of the dealers from the capital.

Of several commercial treaties made with foreign countries in the reign of Henry VII., we may notice one that was concluded with Denmark in 1490, being an extension of one that had been entered into the preceding year. Among other regulations it was provided by this compact that the English should freely enjoy for ever the property of all the lands and tenements they possessed at Bergen in Norway, Lunden and Landscrone in Schonen, Dragor in Zealand, and Loysa in Sweden. At all these places, therefore, there were English residents and commercial establishments. The English settlers in each of these towns, and wherever else there might be any, were to have full liberty, according to custom, to erect themselves into societies, and to elect one of their number as governor or alderman to administer justice among them according to laws agreed upon among themselves, the Danish government engaging to support his authority. On the other hand, there is no mention of any privileges to be enjoyed by subjects of Denmark resident in England, from which we may conclude that there were no Danes settled here. It also appears that all the trade between the two countries was carried on in English vessels. The only commodities specified in the treaty are woollen cloths brought from England, and fish purchased in Denmark, though mention is made of other merchandise in general terms.

Another important treaty of the same kind was made the same year with the republic of Florence, which also contains some things deserving of notice. In 1485 Richard III. had, on the application of some English merchants who proposed engaging in the trade to Pisa, appointed a Florentine merchant to be governor of his subjects who might become resident in that city, or what we should now call English consul there; and from that date in all probability is to be counted the commencement of the trade to Florence in English vessels. From the present treaty it appears that such a trade was now fairly established; and the English settled at Pisa are also spoken of in such terms as should seem to show that they already formed a considerable community. They were to have a right to hire or otherwise procure houses for their residence, and to form themselves into a corporate body, with a governor and other officers according to their own regulations; and were not only to enjoy all the privileges enjoyed by the citizens of Pisa or of Florence, but were even to be exempted from municipal taxation in all parts of the state except in Florence. For these advantages, it is true, they were to pay a good price; for it was stipulated by this treaty—which was to last for six years—both that the English should every year bring as much wool to Florence as had on an average been used to be brought, and that no wool should be allowed to be exported by foreigners from any part of the English dominions, except six hundred sacks annually by the Venetians. The treaty, therefore, secured to the Florentines as much English wool as they required, and of course at no higher prices than they had been accustomed to pay, unless their own demand should become an increasing one—for, with neither a rise in the demand nor a falling off in the supply, there could be no rise in the price; and it also tended to reduce the price of wool in the English market by checking the purchase of it by all other foreigners. This latter regulation, however, was also of the nature of a monopoly granted to the English shipowner—though at the expense of his fellow-countryman, the sheepowner.

The affair of Perkin Warbeck, and the encouragement given to that adventurer by the Duchess Dowager of Burgundy, had the effect of interrupting for some years of this reign the most important branch of the foreign commerce of England—the trade with the Netherlands. Henry first, in 1493, banished all the Flemings out of England, and ordered all intercourse between the two countries to cease ; on which the Archduke Philip, the sovereign of the Netherlands, expelled in like manner all the English subjects resident in his dominions. This state of things continued for nearly three years, when the interruption of trade “began,” says Bacon, “to pinch the merchants of both nations very sore, which moved them by all means they could devise to affect and dispose their sovereigns respectively to open the intercourse again. Wherein time favoured them ; for the archduke and his council began to see that Perkin would prove but a runagate and a citizen of the world, and that it was the part of children to fall out about babies. And the king, on his part, after the attempts upon Kent and Northumberland, began to have the business of Perkin in less estimation, so as he did not put it to account in any consultation of state. But that that moved him most was, that, being a king that loved wealth and treasure, he could not endure to have trade sick, nor any obstruction to continue in the gate-vein which disperseth that blood.” At last, commissioners from both sides met at London, and soon arranged a treaty for the renewal of the trade. “After the intercourse thus restored,” adds the historian, “the English merchants came again to their mansion at Antwerp, where they were received with procession and great joy.” All the while that the stoppage lasted, the merchant adventurers, he says, “being a strong company at that time, and well under-set with rich men, did hold out bravely ; taking off the commodities of the kingdom, though they lay dead upon their hands for want of vent.” This they must have done out of a patriotic zeal in the support of the government, or perhaps they may have been in some measure forced by the urgent solicitations or threats of the king to incur the loss they did. The

treaty made upon this occasion with the Flemings was distinguished by the name of the “ Intercursus Magnus,” or great treaty.

The merchant adventurers here spoken of by Bacon appear to have been the Company of Merchant Adventurers of London, an association which can be traced back nearly to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and which a few years after this time (in 1505) was incorporated by royal charter under the title of the Merchant Adventurers of England. Presuming perhaps upon the aid they had afforded to the crown on this occasion, these London merchants appear to have now made an attempt to take possession of the whole foreign trade of the country, by asserting a right to prevent any private adventurers from resorting to a foreign market without their licence. This gave occasion to the passing of an act of parliament in 1497 (the 12th Henry VII. c. 6), which affords a general view of the foreign commerce of England at that date, as stated in the petition, which the preamble recites, of the merchant adventurers inhabiting and dwelling in divers parts of the realm out of the city of London. The petitioners represent that they had been wont till of late to have free course and recourse with their merchandises into Spain, Portugal, Britany, Ireland, Normandy, France, Seville, Venice, Dantzig, Eastland, Friesland, “ and other divers and many places, regions, and countries, being in league and amity with the king our sovereign lord,” where in their sales and purchases every one used freely to proceed in the manner he deemed most for his individual advantage, “ without exactation, fine, imposition, or contribution to be had or taken of them, or any of them, to, for, or by any English person or persons;” and in like manner they had till now been used to have free passage and resort “ to the coasts of Flanders, Holland, Zealand, Brabant, and other places thereto nigh adjoining, under the obeisance of the Archduke of Burgoyne (or Burgundy), in which places the universal marts be commonly kept and holden four times in the year, to which marts all Englishmen and divers other nations in time past have used to resort, there

to sell and utter the commodities of their countries, and freely to buy again such things as seemed them most necessary and expedient for their profit and the weal of the country and parts that they be come from." Now, however, "the fellowship of the mercers and other merchants and adventurers dwelling and being free within the city of London," had made an ordinance and constitution that no Englishman resorting to the said marts should either buy or sell any goods or merchandises there, unless he first compounded and made fine with the said fellowship of merchants of London at their pleasure, upon pain of forfeiture of the goods so by him bought or sold; "which fine, imposition, and exaction," the petition goes on, "at the beginning, when it was first taken, was demanded by colour of a fraternity of St. Thomas of Canterbury, at which time the said fine was but the value of half an old noble sterling (3s. 4d.), and so by colour of such feigned holiness it hath been suffered to be taken for a few years past; and afterward it was increased to a hundred shillings Flemish; and now it is so that the said fellowship and merchants of London take of every Englishman or young merchant being there, at his first coming, twenty pounds sterling for a fine, to suffer him to buy and sell his own proper goods, wares, and merchandises that he hath there." It is asserted that the effect of this imposition had been to make all merchants not belonging to the London company withdraw themselves from the foreign marts, whereby the woollen cloth, which was one of the great commodities of the realm, "by making whereof the king's true subjects be put in occupation, and the poor people have most universally their living," and also other commodities produced in different parts of the kingdom, were not disposed of as formerly, "but, for lack of utterance of the same in divers parts where such cloths be made, they be conveyed to London, where they be sold far under the price that they be worth, and that they cost to the makers of the same, and at some time they be lent to long days, and the money thereof at divers times never paid." On the other hand, foreign commodities, the importation of which was now wholly

in the hands of the London company, were sold at so high a price that the buyer of the same could not live there-upon—that is to say, could not retail them at a living profit. “By reason whereof,” the petition concludes, “all the cities, towns, and boroughs of this realm in effect be fallen into great poverty, ruin, and decay; and now in manner they be without hope of comfort or relief, and the king’s customs and subsidies and the navy of the land greatly decreased and diminished, and daily they be like more and more to decay, if due reformation be not had in this behalf.” Although, however, the act seems to adopt this representation as correct, it does not go the length of putting down the privilege claimed by the London company: the company, it would appear, was too formidable for that; all that was done, therefore, was to limit the fine they should be entitled to exact for the future to the moderate amount of ten marks, or 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* To that extent the act sanctioned the hitherto doubtful and disputed pretensions of the London merchant adventurers, and gave them so far a legal right of control over the whole foreign trade of the country. We shall find that the powers which they thus acquired formed a fertile source of controversy and contention for ages afterwards.

An act of parliament made in 1504, to regulate the importation of foreign silk (19 Hen. VII. c. 21), indicates what branches of the silk manufacture were now established in England, by prohibiting all persons for the future from bringing into the realm to be sold “any manner of silk wrought by itself, or with any other stuff, in any place out of this realm, in ribbons, laces, girdles, corses, cauls, corses of tissues, or points.” All these articles of knit silk, “the people of England,” as Bacon expresses it, “could then well skill to make.” But the importation of “all other manner of silks” was freely permitted; “for that the realm,” observes Bacon, “had of them no manufacture in use at that time.” The historian praises this law as having the stamp of the king’s wisdom and policy; and it “pointed,” he says, “at a true principle, that, where foreign materials are but superfluities, foreign manufactures should be prohibited;

for that will either banish the superfluity or gain the manufacture." But where would be the harm of having the superfluity, even without the manufacture? The superfluity could not be brought from abroad without the money to purchase it being acquired by some species of industry or other exercised within the realm. For the encouragement of the national industry, therefore, the acquisition of the superfluity by purchase comes to the same thing with its acquisition by the introduction of the manufacture. From the title of this act, "For Silkwomen," it may be inferred that the trifling branches of the silk manufacture, consisting merely of knitting, that had as yet been introduced into England were exclusively in the hands of females.

In January, 1506, the Archduke Philip, sailing from Flanders to Spain with his wife, now, by the death of her mother, become Queen of Castile, was driven by stress of weather into Weymouth, and found himself at once the guest and the prisoner of the English king. On this occasion a treaty was wrung by Henry from the captive sovereign of the Netherlands which was called by the Flemings the Intercursus Malus, or evil treaty, by way of contrast with "the great treaty" of 1496. The terms of the new arrangement, however, are now of no interest; it is sufficient to state that they were somewhat more favourable to the English merchant than those of the former treaty.

A sort of charter of indemnity granted to certain Venetian merchants by Henry in 1507, with the view of screening them, it is conjectured, from prosecutions to which they had exposed themselves by the advantage they had taken of previous illegal grants made to them by the king, is preserved in Rymer, and may be noticed as containing an enumeration of the principal foreign nations then carrying on trade with and in this country. The Venetians are authorised to buy and sell, for ten years to come, at London and elsewhere, in England, Ireland, and Calais, woollen cloth, lead, tin, leather, &c., with the English, Genoese, Venetians, Florentines, Luccans, Spaniards, Portuguese, Flemings, Hollanders, Brabanters,

Burgundians, German Hanseatics, Lombards, and Easterlings, and all other foreigners. The Scots and French are omitted in this list, probably because there were no merchants of those nations resident in England, though some trade was, no doubt, carried on with both.

A document of the following year, found in the same repository, affords us a list of what were then accounted the wealthiest and most important cities and towns in England—the security for the marriage portion of two hundred and fifty thousand gold crowns to be paid with Henry's daughter Mary, when it was proposed to marry her to the Emperor Maximilian's grandson, Charles (afterwards the Emperor Charles V.). On this occasion the towns that became bound for Henry's performance of his engagement were, London, Coventry, Norwich, Chester, Worcester, Exeter, York, Bristol, Southampton, Boston, Hull, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The short space of time comprehended in the reign of Henry VII. of England is memorable for the two greatest events in the history of nautical discovery and of modern commerce,—the achievement of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, and the revelation of the new world of America by the voyage of Columbus. Both these great discoveries were made in the search after the same object, a route to India by sea, which serves in some degree to account for the two having been so nearly coincident in point of time. Bartholomew Diaz returned to Portugal from the voyage in which he had rounded the southern extremity of Africa in December, 1487. Some years before this date, however, Columbus had conceived his more brilliant idea of reaching the oriental world by sailing towards the west; a course which, on his conviction of the earth's rotundity, he calculated would bring him to the eastern confines of the same golden continent the western parts of which were gained by proceeding in the opposite direction. Among the various states and crowned heads to which the illustrious Genoese proposed the glory of his great enterprise before he found a patroness in Isabella of Spain, one was our Henry VII., to whom he sent his brother Bartholomew in 1488. In

his passage to England, Bartholomew was captured by pirates, plundered of everything, and made a slave. After some time he made his escape, and reached this country, but in such a state of destitution that he was obliged to apply himself to drawing sea-charts for a livelihood, and for the means of procuring himself decent clothes, before he could appear in the royal presence. King Henry so far listened to his proposals as to desire him to bring his brother to England ; and he was on his way to Spain for that purpose, when, on reaching Paris, he learned that Columbus had already set out on his voyage under the patronage of the Spanish court. The capture of Bartholomew by pirates, it is remarked by the historian of our commercee, “ thus turned out, under the direction of Providence, the means of preserving the English from losing their industry and commercial spirit in the mines of Mexico and Peru.” Columbus sailed on his memorable voyage, from the bar of Saltes, near Palos, in Andalusia, on Friday, the 3rd of August, 1492, and reached the island of San Salvador on the 12th of October. He afterwards discovered Cuba, Hispaniola, and others of the West Indian islands : and on the 15th of March, 1493, he again landed at Palos, bringing back to the astonished nations of Europe the tidings of his success, in having reached what he continued to believe to his dying day to be the eastern shore of the Indies—for it was not till twenty years after this time, and seven years after the original discoverer of the new world had been laid in his grave, that the Pacific was first seen from the mountains near Panama by Balboa. On the 25th of September, 1493, Columbus sailed from Cadiz on his second voyage, from which he returned to the same port on the 11th of June, 1496, after having discovered the Caribbee Islands, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica.

Meanwhile, the spirit of enterprise in the new direction thus pointed out had spread among the navigators and governments of other countries ; and on the 5th of March, in this last-mentioned year, the King of England granted a patent to John Cabot, or Gabotto, a Venetian, then settled at Bristol, and to his three sons, Lewis,

Sebastian, and Sanches, authorising them to navigate the eastern, western, and northern seas, under the English flag, with five ships, and as many men as they should judge proper, at their own sole costs and charges, to discover the countries of gentiles or infidels, in whatever part of the world situated, which had hitherto been unknown to all Christians ; "with power to them, or any of them," continued the patent, "to set up our banners in any town, castle, island, or continent, of the countries so to be discovered by them ; and such of the said towns, castles, or islands, so found out and subdued by them, to occupy and possess, as our vassals, governors, lieutenants, and deputies ; the dominion, title, and jurisdiction thereof, and of the *terra firma* or continent so found out, remaining to us." Henry characteristically added a provision to the effect, that, out of the profits of their discoveries under this charter, the Cabots should be obliged to pay to him, after each voyage, one-fifth part, either in merchandise or in money. He is, therefore, entitled to very little credit for having promoted this expedition, in regard to which he merely interfered to secure to himself the lion's share in the results, without having contributed anything to the expense of the outfit. The Cabots—at least the father and his second son, Sebastian, the most scientific and enterprising of the family, although at this time only in his nineteenth year—sailed from Bristol in the beginning of May, 1497, in a ship of their own, called the Matthew ; "with whom," according to Bacon, "ventured also three small ships of London merchants, fraught with some gross and slight wares, fit for commerce with barbarous people." On the 24th of June, they discovered what they supposed to be an island, but what appears to have been the coast of Labrador, in about latitude 56° . From this point they are said to have sailed northwards—in the hope of finding a passage to India or China—as far as latitude $67\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Then, from an entry under date of 10th August, 1497, in the privy-purse expenses of Henry VII., of a donation of 10*l.*, "to him that found the new isle," it is conjectured that the Cabots immediately returned to England. To the

country they had discovered they gave the name of Prima Vista (First View), which, however, it soon lost, having been since successively called Corterealis, from Gaspar Cortereal, a Portuguese, who fell in with the same coast in 1500; Estotiland, from its having been supposed to be the country so denominated in the (possibly fabulous) account of the voyage of the Zeni, about 1350; New France, after Canada was taken possession of and settled by the French; New Britain, by the English after their discoveries, in the early part of the seventeenth century, along the coasts of Hudson's Bay; and by the Portuguese Labrador, or Tierra di Labrador, said to be a corruption of *Laborador* (labour), from some traces of cultivation which the part of the coast they first saw seemed to present.

Sebastian Cabot appears to have made two more voyages in the two following years, in the second of which, taking a course declining towards the south, he reached the Gulf of Mexico.* Columbus also, on the 30th of May, 1498, sailed from San Lucar de Barrameda, on his third voyage, in which he discovered the island of Trinidad and the country adjacent to the mouths of the Orinoco—his first view of the American continent, the northern coast of which, as we have just seen, had been reached about a year before by the Cabots. And contemporaneously with these voyages towards the west, by the Spanish and English navigators, those of Portugal were prosecuting the passage towards the east around the extremity of Africa, which had been laid open by Bartholomew Diaz. On the 8th of July, 1497, Vasco de Gama sailed from the Tagus on the first voyage by that route to India, the western coast of which, at Cali-

* In the notice of Remarkable Occurrences in the reign of Henry VII., in Kennet's Complete History, it is said, without any authority being given, that, in the seventeenth year of the reign, Sebastian Cabot brought three Indians into England, who were clothed in beasts' skins, and eat raw flesh. "Two of them," it is added, "were seen two years after, dressed like Englishmen, and not to be distinguished from them."

cut, in Malabar, he reached on the 22nd of May, 1498. Gama returned to Lisbon in September, 1499. Finally, in the following year, 1500, the coast of Brazil was accidentally discovered, by the Portuguese admiral, Pedro Alvarez de Cabral, being driven upon it by a storm, while following the course of Gama to Calicut, at the head of a fleet of thirteen ships, carrying a force to effect a settlement in Malabar—a circumstance, as has been remarked, which shows that America, even if Columbus had never existed, could not possibly have long remained concealed after the Portuguese began to navigate the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean.

Bacon states that, besides the patent to the Cabots, Henry, "again, in the sixteenth year of his reign (1500), and likewise in the eighteenth (1502), granted forth new commissions for the discovery and investing of unknown lands." The commission of 1500 has not been preserved; but that of 1502 is in Rymer, and it refers to the former as having been granted to Hugh Elliot and Thomas Ashurst, merchants of Bristol; to John Gun-salus and Francis Fernandus, natives of Portugal; and also to Richard Ward, John Thomas, and John Fernandus. In the second licence the three last names are left out. In other respects the licence is nearly of the same tenor with that granted some years before to the Cabots, except that it forbids the adventurers to concern themselves with or to offer to molest such heathen and infidel countries as were already discovered and reduced to the obedience of the King of Portugal, or of any other prince the friend or ally of the king. This was all the respect that Henry chose to pay to the famous award of Pope Alexander VI. in 1493, by which, drawing a line from pole to pole through the middle of the Atlantic and the southern continent of the new world, he bestowed all the countries that should be discovered to the west of that boundary on the King of Spain, and all those to the east of it on the King of Portugal. None of these expeditions of discovery, however, patronised (if that term can be used) by Henry, were attended with any success—the natural consequence of the parsimony which made

him refuse all pecuniary assistance to the adventurers, who were all apparently as ill able as projectors usually are to prosecute their ingenious schemes from their own resources. This very wary king was not to be induced to spend his money even in taking possession of a new country when it was discovered for him; no attempt seems to have been made to turn to account the discovery of North America by the Cabots; and, as for the other adventurers he afterwards sent forth, none of them is recorded to have ever caught a glimpse of anything new in the shape of either continent or isle.

The more easy intercourse opened with India, by the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, produced almost immediately considerable changes in the current of European commerce. The Venetians, bringing home the spices and other productions of the East by land carriage, soon found themselves unable to compete with their rivals, the Portuguese, now enjoying the advantage of the much cheaper conveyance by sea; and Lisbon became what Venice had been—the great source of the supply of these commodities, and the resort of traders from every part of Europe. The Lisbon merchants also carried the productions of India in so much larger quantities than had ever before been known to the great intermediate mart of Antwerp, that the wealth and grandeur of the latter city also may be said to have commenced with this date. The reduction of price so prodigiously extended the consumption of these commodities all over Europe, that they now formed one of the chief branches of the Antwerp trade. The Italian historian of the Low Countries, Ludovico Guicciardini, writing not long after the middle of the sixteenth century, calculates that the value of the spices alone brought to Antwerp from Lisbon exceeded a million of crowns yearly. Tempted by the new trade, many German and other foreign merchants came to settle at Antwerp, and to contribute to its rising fortunes the aid of their resources and enterprise.

Marked effects, also, were not long in beginning to flow from the discovery of America and the West Indies. Herrera, the historian of the Spanish Indies, relates that,

a few years after the commencement of the sixteenth century, the gold brought home by the Spaniards from Hispaniola amounted annually to about 460,000 pieces of eight, or above 100,000*l.* sterling. This, however, was an influx of wealth which did not tend to invigorate the nation that received it, or to give life to its industry, like that gathered by the busy hand of commerce. But the import of the cotton, sugar, ginger, and other productions of her West Indian possessions, also created a new branch of trade which Spain monopolised, and which gave employment to a considerable quantity of shipping.

In the benefit of all these new channels, along which the productions of distant parts of the earth were made to flow towards Europe, the English, though they had not yet embarked in the trade either to the east or to the west, could not fail indirectly to share. Accordingly, we find our historians testifying to the decided augmentation of the wealth of the country, and the more general diffusion of luxuries among all classes, in the course of the reign of Henry VII. Some of them, indeed, ascribe the improvement chiefly, or in great part, to the active encouragement given by that king to commercial enterprise. "This good prince," says Hall, the chronicler, "by his high policy, marvellously enriched his realm and himself, and left his subjects in high wealth and prosperity, as is apparent by the great abundance of gold and silver yearly brought into the realm, in plate, money, and bullion, by merchants passing and repassing, to whom the king, of his own goods, lent money largely, without any gain or profit, to the intent that merchandise, being of all crafts the chief art, and to all men both most profitable and necessary, might be the more plentifuller used, haunted, and employed in his realms and dominions." The latter part of this statement (which is translated from Polydore Virgil) may warrant some scepticism; but it is possible that, seeing the taking of interest was forbidden by the law, Henry may have sometimes advanced money, on good security, to assist in adventures of which he was merely to have his corresponding share in the profits.

The increase of the foreign trade of the country, and of the wealth of the people and their command over the conveniences and luxuries of life, proceeded at an accelerated rate during the early part of the next reign. Of this there are various indications both in the notices of the chroniclers and in the pages of the Statute-book. An act, for instance, of 1512 (4 Henry VIII. c. 6), for regulating the sealing or stamping at the Custom-house of cloths of gold and silver, of "bawdekin," velvet, damask, satin, sarsenet, "tartron," camblet, and every other cloth of silk and gold brought from beyond the seas, incidentally mentions that it was not unusual for 3000 or 4000 pieces of these fabrics to be brought over in one ship. Most of the artificers of the more costly description of articles, and also many of the persons who traded in these and other commodities, appear still to have been foreigners settled in England; and from the details that are given of a great insurrection of the native Londoners on May-day, 1517, against these strangers, we have some curious particulars of the branches of industry then carried on in the capital. The popular complaints against the foreigners were, according to Hall, "that there were such numbers of them employed as artificers that the English merchants had little to do by reason the merchant strangers bring in all silks, cloths of gold, wine, oil, iron, &c., that no man almost buyeth of an Englishman; they also export so much wool, tin, and lead, that English adventurers can have no living; that foreigners compass the city round about, in Southwark, Westminster, Temple Bar, Holborn, St. Martin's [Le Grand], St. John's Street, Aldgate, Tower Hill, and St. Catherine's; and they forestall the market, so that no good thing for them cometh to the market; which are the causes that Englishmen want and starve, whilst foreigners live in abundance and pleasure." The importation of various articles from abroad, that interfered with home produce and manufactures, was also loudly cried out against; the Dutchmen in particular, it was asserted, brought over "iron, timber, and leather, ready manufactured, and nails, locks, baskets, cupboards, stools,

tables, chests, girdles, saddles, and painted cloths." This proved a very serious tumult. Its chief instigator was one John Lincoln, styled a broker, by whom a Dr. Bell, a canon of the Spital, was prevailed upon in the first instance to read from the pulpit at the Spital, upon the Tuesday in Easter week, a bill or written detail of the popular grievances, and to follow up that text with a sermon, well adapted to blow the feelings it had kindled into a blaze. "Cœlum cœli Domino," he began, " terram autem dedit filiis hominum :"—"the heavens to the Lord of heaven, but the earth he hath given to the children of men." "And then he showed," says the chronicler, " how this land was given to Englishmen ; and, as birds defend their nests, so ought Englishmen to cherish and maintain themselves, and to hurt and grieve aliens, for respect of their commonwealth." It now began to be whispered about that, on the coming 1st of May, there was to be a general massacre of the foreigners ; in terror of which, many of the latter left the city. On this coming to the ears of the council, Wolsey sent for the lord mayor on May-eve, and ordered him to take measures to preserve the peace ; whereupon a meeting of the aldermen was held ; and, about half-past eight, each sent to his ward directing that no man after nine o'clock should stir out of his house, but keep his doors shut, and his servants within, until nine o'clock in the morning. "After this command was given in the evening," proceeds the account, "as Sir John Mundy, alderman, came from his ward, he found two young men in Cheap, playing at the bucklers, and a great many young men looking on them—for the command seemed to be scarcely published. He ordered them to leave off ; and because one of them asked ' Why ? ' he would have them sent to the Compter. But the prentices resisted the alderman, taking the young man from him, and cried, ' Prentices ! Prentices ! Clubs ! Clubs ! ' Then out of every door came clubs and other weapons, so that the alderman was put to flight. Then more people came out of every quarter, and forth came serving-men, watermen, courtiers, and others ; so that by eleven o'clock there were

in Cheap six or seven hundred ; and out of St. Paul's churchyard came about three hundred." Then, while the rioters continued to receive accessions from all quarters, they proceeded to the Compter and Newgate, broke open both prisons, and took out some persons that had been committed for attacks on foreigners during the preceding few days. The mayor and sheriffs to no purpose made proclamation in the king's name ; the mob soon fell from breaking open the prisons to plundering private houses, especially those of foreigners, and seeking for the owners, none of whom however they found, to strike off their heads. But at last, towards three o'clock in the morning, they began to return home, and then about three hundred of them were intercepted by the authorities, and sent to the Tower, Newgate, and the Compters. In the height of the disturbance matters had looked so serious that Sir Roger Cholmeley, the Lieutenant of the Tower, had thought it necessary to fire off several pieces of ordnance against the city, which, however, did not do much damage. A few days after a number of the rioters were brought to trial, and, being found guilty, were condemned to be drawn, hanged, and quartered ; " for execution whereof ten pairs of gallows were set up in divers parts of the city, as at Aldgate, Blanchapleton, Grass-street, Leadenhall, before each of the Compters, at Newgate, St. Martin's, at Aldersgate, and Bishopgate ; and these gallows were set upon wheels, to be removed from street to street, and from door to door, as the prisoners were to be executed." But, in the end, only Lincoln suffered ; he was hanged on the 7th of May at the standard in Cheapside. About a fortnight after a general pardon was granted to the rest by the king, and the citizens were again received into favour ; " though, as it is thought," concludes the chronicler, " not without paying a considerable sum of money to the cardinal [Wolsey] to stand their friend ; for at that time he was in such power that he did all with the king." This day was long remembered in London under the name of " Evil May-day ;" and it is recorded that the ancient Mayings and May games, with the

triumphant setting up of the great shaft in Leadenhall-street before the church of St. Andrew, were never afterwards so commonly used as had been customary before.

In connexion with this affair we may mention an act of parliament, which was passed in 1525 (14 and 15 Hen. VIII. c. 2), for regulating the taking of apprentices by "strangers born out of the king's obeisance using any manner of handicraft within the realm." No such stranger, it was enacted, should in future, under a penalty of 10*l.* for each offence, take any apprentice who was not a native of the country, or should keep any more than two foreign journeymen at the same time. By a subsequent clause, also, all aliens exercising any handicraft in London or the suburbs were placed each under the superintendence—or "the search and reformation," as it is expressed—of the fellowship of his particular craft in the city of London, to which was to be associated for that purpose one alien householder of the same craft, to be chosen by the wardens of the company; and every such foreign artificer, being a smith, joiner, or cooper, was to receive a proper mark from his craft, which he was to stamp upon every article he fabricated. This clause is curious as giving us a list of the places that were then considered to form the suburbs of London; which are enumerated as being, besides the town of Westminster, the parishes of St. Martin's in the Field, of our Lady of the Strand, of St. Clement of Danes without Temple Bar, of St. Giles in the Field, and of St. Andrew's in Holborn, the town and borough of Southwark, Shoreditch, Whitechapel parish, St. John's-street, the parish of Clerkenwell, St. Botolph's parish without Aldgate, St. Catherine's, and Bermondsey-street. Most of these places, all of which are now included within the metropolis, were then separated from the city by fields, gardens, or other open spaces.

Some indications of a disposition on the part of the English to engage in the new branches of foreign trade, which had sprung out of the late nautical discoveries, begin about this time to present themselves. According to Lord Herbert, a proposition was even made, in 1527,

by the Emperor Charles V., to sell to King Henry a right, which he pretended to have as King of Spain, to the Molucca Islands, which, however, came to nothing. The same year, also, this author tells us, the English king “sent out two fair ships to discover new regions, then daily found out by the Portuguese and Spaniard ;” but in this attempt he met with no greater success than his father. It appears, moreover, from a passage in Hakluyt’s Collection, that some merchants of Bristol had now for some years been in the habit of exporting cloth, soap, and other commodities to the Canary Islands, by means of the ships of San Lucar in Spain, and of receiving back by the same conveyance dyeing drugs, sugar, and kid-skins. But the chief branch of the foreign commerce of the country still continued to be the trade with the Netherlands, where, at the great emporium of Antwerp, the English merchants both found purchasers for their native produce and manufactures of all kinds, and were enabled to supply themselves in return with whatever quantities they required of the productions of all parts of the globe. Accordingly, the apprehended interruption of this trade on Henry’s declaration of war against the emperor, in 1528, threatened to derange the whole system of the national industry. “Our merchants,” says Lord Herbert, “(who used not the trade to the many northern and remote countries they now frequent), foreseeing the consequences of these wars, refused to buy the cloths that were brought to Blackwell Hall, in London ; whereupon the clothiers, spinners, and carders, in many shires of England, began to mutiny.” To appease this clamour of the manufacturing population, Wolsey issued his commands to the merchants that they should take the cloths at a reasonable price from the poor men’s hands, with a threat that, if they did not, the king himself should buy them and sell them to foreigners. This procedure may let us into the secret of the means by which, in the quarrel with the government of the Netherlands in the last reign, the merchants of London were induced, as related in a preceding page, during the three years that the quarrel lasted, to continue their pur-

chases in the home-market, notwithstanding the stoppage of the usual great vent of exportation. On that occasion the interests of peace were forced to give way to those of war ; but it was different now. "The sullen merchants," Lord Herbert goes on to inform us, little moved with the cardinal's menaces, said they had no reason to buy commodities they knew not how to utter. Propositions were thrown out for the establishment of a new continental mart at Calais or Abbeville ; but the "sullen merchants" would not understand any of these schemes. At last the council, being advised with, told the king "that the resultance of war in the Low Countries could be nothing but a grievance to his subjects, a decay of trade, a diminution of his customs, and addition to the greatness of Francis, who would have the advantage of all that was undertaken in this kind :" on which it was resolved that the war should be suspended for the present. This result shows very strikingly how completely its foreign commerce was now become part of the very life-blood of the nation ; and it should also seem to warrant the inference that the trade with Antwerp had considerably risen in importance within the last thirty years,—the consequence, doubtless, in great part, of the general commercial revolution that had been wrought by the discovery of the new route to the East.

The spirit of mercantile adventure in England, however, was now turning likewise to other quarters, though its excursions out of its accustomed track were still somewhat timid or desultory. Among the notices collected by the industrious Hakluyt are the following :—About 1530 Captain William Hawkins, of Plymouth, made a trading voyage to Guinea for elephants' teeth, &c., and thence proceeded to Brazil, where he also traded. Two years after he is noted to have made another such voyage to Brazil. Trading voyages, both to Brazil and Guinea, became common soon after this date. From about 1511 to 1534 divers tall ships of London, Southampton, and Bristol, carried on an unusually great trade to Sicily, Candia, and Chio, and sometimes to Cyprus, to Tripoli, and to Barutti in Syria. Their exports were woollen

cloths, calf-skins, &c.; their imports silks, camblets, rhubarb, malmsey, muscadel and other wines, oils, cotton-wool, Turkey carpets, galls, and Indian spices. One of these voyages up the Mediterranean usually occupied a whole year, and was accounted exceedingly difficult and dangerous. Sundry foreign vessels, such as Candiots, Ragusans, Sicilians, Genoese, Venetian gal-leasses, and Spanish and Portuguese ships, were also employed by the English merchants in this trade.

An important act of parliament affecting commercial transactions was passed in 1546, the last year of this reign (stat. 37 Hen. VIII. c. 9), which, although entitled “An Act against Usury,” in fact repealed all the old laws against lending and borrowing money on interest, and allowed interest to be taken at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum. The preamble recites that the former statutes against usury have “been so obscure and dark in sentences, words, and terms, and upon the same so many doubts, ambiguities, and questions have risen and grown, and the same acts, statutes, and laws been of so little force and effect, that by reason thereof little or no punishment hath ensued to the offenders of the same, but rather hath encouraged them to use the same.” It is most certain, indeed, that no law could prevent the taking of interest, which did not put down the lending of money altogether.

A few notices that have been preserved relating to the shipping of the early part of the sixteenth century may here be introduced. The royal navy of England, properly so called, takes its rise from the reign of Henry VIII. At first Henry possessed only one ship of war of his own, the Great Harry; to which a second was added by the capture from the Scottish captain, Andrew Barton, of his ship called the Lion, in June, 1511,—an incident which led, two years after, to the war between the two kingdoms, the battle of Flodden, and the death of James IV. The next year, 1512, Henry built another ship at Woolwich, the Regent, weighing 1000 tons, and described as the greatest ship that had yet been seen in England. From an indenture drawn up between the

king and his admiral, Sir Edward Howard, for the victualling of the fleet fitted out this year to aid in the war against France, it appears that the Regent was to carry 700 soldiers, mariners, and gunners.* A ship apparently still larger than this, however, is described as having been sent to sea this same year by the Scottish king in a fleet which he equipped for the assistance of France, but which was, in a storm, scattered and destroyed on its way to that country. This Scottish ship, called the Great Michael, the largest that had been built in modern times, was 240 feet in length by 56 in breadth, —dimensions, however, which, in the latter direction especially, were materially diminished by the thickness of the planking, which, that it might be proof against shot, was not less than 10 feet. She carried 35 guns (all on the upper deck), besides 300 smaller pieces of artillery called culverins, double-dogs, &c.; and her complement consisted, besides officers, of 300 seamen, 120 gunners, and 1000 soldiers.† But Henry did not satisfy himself with merely building ships; he laid the necessary foundations for the permanent maintenance of a naval force by the institution of the first Navy Office, with commissioners, or principal officers of the navy, as they were styled, for the superintendence of that particular department of the public service. He also established by royal charter, in the fourth year of his reign, the "Corporation of the Trinity House of Deptford," for examining, licensing, and regulating pilots, and for ordering and directing the erection of beacons and lighthouses, the placing of buoys, &c.; to which he afterwards added subordinate establishments of the same kind at Hull and

* *Fœdera*, vol. xiii.

† See note on Anderson's *Hist. of Commerce*, by Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 42, and the authorities there referred to. "She cumbered all Scotland," says Lindsay of Pitscottie, "to put her to the sea; and when she was committit to float, with her masts and sails complete, with tows [ropes] and anchors effering [appertaining] thereto, she was counted to the king to forty thousand pounds of expenses by her orders and cannons whilk she bare."

Newcastle. The navy-yards and storehouses at Woolwich and Deptford also owe their origin to this king; who has a very good right, therefore, to the title of the creator of the English navy. Henry's great ship, the Regent, was blown up, with the 700 men on board of her, in a battle fought with the French fleet off Brest, a few months after she put to sea; on which he caused another, still larger, to be built, which he called the Henry Grace de Dieu. Several others were afterwards added, so that, at the close of the reign, the entire navy belonging to the crown amounted to about 12,500 tons. Henry, also, about 1525, erected at a great expense the first pier at Dover; and in 1531 an act of parliament was passed (23 Hen. VIII. c. 8) "for the amending and maintenance" of the havens and ports of Plymouth, Dartmouth, Tinnmouth, Falmouth, and Fowey. In the preamble it is asserted that these ports had been, in time past, the principal and most commodious havens within the realm for the preservation of ships resorting from all parts of the world, as well in peril of storms as otherwise; but that, whereas formerly ships of 800 tons might easily enter them at low water, "and there lie in surety, what wind or tempest soever did blow," they were now in a manner utterly decayed and destroyed by means of certain tin-works, called stream-works, which had so choked them up that a ship of 100 tons could "scantly enter at the half-flood." The act, however, did not provide for the "amending" of the harbours further than by prohibiting the working of such stream-works, except under certain specified regulations, for the future.

The latter part of this reign is marked by the commencement of a course of public improvements intimately connected with the internal trade of the country—the reparation of streets and highways. The first act in the Statute-Book on this important subject is the 14 and 15 Hen. VIII. c. 6, passed in 1523, authorising the proprietor of the manor of Hempstead, in the weald of Kent, to enclose an "old common way or street for carriages, and all other passages and business," on laying out another at the least as broad and as commodious in a

different line; and also, “in consideration that many other common ways in the said weald of Kent be so deep and noyous by wearing and course of water and other occasions, that people cannot have their carriages or passages by horses upon or by the same, but to their great pains, peril, and jeopardy,” permitting all other persons that might be so disposed, to lay out new and more commodious roads, by oversight and assent of two justees of peace of the county, and twelve other discreet men inhabiting within the hundred or the hundred adjoining. In 1534, by the 26 Hen. VIII. c. 7, this act was extended to the county of Sussex. About the same time began the paving of the streets of London, the first act for that purpose being the statute 24 Hen. VIII. c. 11, passed in 1532-3, “for paving of the highway between the Strand Cross and Charing Cross”—that is, the greater part of the line of way now known as the Strand, the Strand Cross having stood at the church of St. Clement Danes. But this road was hardly as yet accounted one of the streets of the metropolis; it was rather a country road leading to the village of Charing, with many houses, indeed, built on both sides of it, but yet with the line of building everywhere broken by fields and gardens. This “common highway” is described in the preamble of the act as “very noyous and foul, and in many places thereof very jeopardous” to all people passing and repassing, “as well on horseback as on foot, both in winter and in summer, by night and by day;” the occasion of which is affirmed to be that “the landlords and owners of all the lands and tenements next adjoining, on both sides of the said common highway, be and have been remiss and negligent, and also refuse and will not make and support the said highway with paving every of them after the portion of his ground adjoining to the same.” It appears that the part of the Strand between the church of St. Clement Danes and Temple Bar was already paved; and the act directs that the owners of lands adjoining to the rest of the road shall each pave in the same manner the part lying along his lands or tenements as far as to the middle; which it is

declared will be “a great comfort,” not only to all the king’s subjects thereabouts dwelling, but also to all others that way passing and repassing, especially to all persons coming and going between the city and the town of Westminster about the deeds of the laws there kept in the term season. The following year another act (25 Hen. VIII. c. 8) was passed for the repaving of Holborn. This street is described as being the common passage for all carriages carried from west and north-west parts of the realm, and as having been, till of late, so well and substantially paved that people had good and sure passage through it; but now, proceeds the complaint of the inhabitants to the king, recited in the preamble of the act, “for lack of renewing of the said paving by the landlords, which dwell not within the city, the way is so noyous and so full of sloughs and other incumbrances, that oftentimes many of your subjects riding through the said street and way be in jeopardy of hurt, and have almost perished.” A similar enactment is thereupon made to that in the statute for paving the Strand; and a general power is given to the mayor and aldermen to see the pavements maintained upon the same principle in all the streets of the city and suburbs, and also of the borough of Southwark. Yet a few years after this, in 1540, we find a new act (the 32 Hen. VIII. c. 17) directing the repavement of part of Holborn and various other streets, which are described as still “very foul and full of pits and sloughs, very perilous and noyous, as well for all the king’s subjects through and by them repairing and passing, as well on horseback as on foot, as also with carriage.” These streets were—1. The causeway or highway leading from Aldgate to Whitechapel Church: 2. The causeway from the bridge at Holborn Bars “unto the end of High Holborn westwards as far as any habitation or dwelling is on both the sides of the same street:” 3. Chancery-lane, “from the bars besides the Rolls late made and set up by the Lord Privy Seal unto the said highway in Holborn:” 4. Gray’s Inn lane, “from Holborn Bars northward as far as any habitation is there:” 5. Shoe-lane: and 6. Fewter (now Fetter)

lane : the two last being described as "thoroughfares and passages from Fleet-street into Holborn within the liberties of the city of London." This appears to have been the first time that Holborn was paved to the west of the city bars ; nor was the street all built on both sides for any considerable way beyond that point till many years later. With regard to the general state of the roads in the country about this date we have little or no information ; but we may be certain that the condition of the best of them, as was the case long afterwards, was wretched enough. It appears, however, from the diplomatic correspondence of the time, that, towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII., letters were conveyed by the government expresses from London to Edinburgh in about four days.

Sebastian Cabot, the discoverer, with his father, of North America, on finding himself neglected by Henry VII., had entered the service of the Spanish government in 1512, but appears to have returned to his native country soon after the death of King Ferdinand in 1516. He is known to have been employed by Henry VIII., in 1517, in conjunction with a Sir Thomas Perte, to make another attempt in quest of a north-west passage, in the course of which he is said to have again reached the latitude of $67\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, and to have entered Hudson's Bay, and given English names to sundry places on its coasts. These discoveries, however, were soon forgotten, like those which their author had made in the same regions twenty years before ; and Cabot again offered his services to the government of Spain, by which he was for some years employed in various distinguished capacities. He remained abroad till the accession of Edward VI., and then, in 1548, once more made his appearance at the English court, where he was received with much welcome by the young king. In the beginning of the following year Edward bestowed upon him a pension of 250 marks (166*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*), which he enjoyed during the rest of the reign : and he continued to be consulted in all affairs relating to navigation and trade. In 1553, on the suggestion of Cabot, some merchants of London formed them-

selves into a company, of which he was chosen the governor, for the prosecution of maritime discovery, with a particular view to the anxiously desired passage by the northern seas to China and the other countries of the East. Three vessels were forthwith sent out, under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby, to whom Cabot gave a paper of remarkably judicious instructions, and King Edward letters addressed to all kings and princes, requesting their friendship. One of the ships is stated to have been sheathed with thin plates of lead, a contrivance which is spoken of as a new invention. Willoughby, after having reached the 72nd degree of north latitude, took refuge for the winter in a harbour in Russian Lapland, where he and the crews of two of his ships, seventy in number, were frozen to death; but the third ship, commanded by Richard Chancellor, found its way into the White Sea, then entirely unknown to the English, though a correct description of it had been given to Alfred by Ohthere more than 600 years before. Chancellor landed near Archangel, from whence he travelled on sledges to Moscow, and there obtained from the Czar, John Basilowitz, letters for King Edward, and valuable trading privileges for his employers. This was the origin of the English Russia Company, which was incorporated the next year by a charter from Queen Mary, and soon became a very flourishing and important association. Its affairs appear to have continued, at least for three or four years, to be superintended by Cabot, its originator, of whom, however, the last thing recorded is, that in 1557 the half of his pension was given to another person, to whom, at the same time, all his maps and papers were delivered over. He probably died within a year or two after this date.

Cabot's first voyage, in 1497, may possibly have given rise to another branch of trade, which was now carried on to some extent—the cod-fishery of Newfoundland. In 1517 there are said to have been about fifty Spanish, French, and Portuguese ships engaged in this fishery; but the first attempt of the English to obtain a share of the trade was not made till 1536. From an act of par-

liament passed in 1542 (the 33rd Hen. VIII. c. 2), it appears that fish were then commonly imported to England from Newfoundland, or New-land, as it is called in the act, as well as from Iceland, Scotland, the Orkneys, Shetland, and Ireland, and also from the Flemings, the Zealanders, the people of Picardy, and the Normans; from all of whom, however, the act directs that no more fresh fish should be brought, sturgeon, porpoise, and seal excepted, on the alleged ground of many disastrous consequences that followed to the towns by the sea-side in the counties of Kent and Sussex, and to the whole commonwealth, from the fishermen of the said towns abandoning their proper craft, and, instead of filling their boats from their own nets, purchasing the commodity from the fishermen of the opposite coasts. The growing importance of the Newfoundland fishery is attested by an act passed in 1548 (the 2nd and 3rd Edw. VI. c. 6), by which it is enacted, that, whereas for a few years past there had been levied by the officers of the Admiralty, from merchants and fishermen resorting to Iceland, Newfoundland, Ireland, and other places commodious for fishing, "divers great exactions, as sums of money, doles or shares of fish, and other like things, to the great discouragement and hindrance of the same merchants and fishermen, and no little damage to the whole commonweal," all such exactions should henceforth cease.

We are probably to reckon among the religious reforms of the reign of Edward VI., an act which was passed in 1552 (5 and 6 Edw. VI. c. 20), under the title of "A Bill against Usury." In this statute it is declared that the law of the late reign, allowing the taking of interest upon money lent to the amount of ten per cent., "was not meant or intended for maintenance or allowance of usury, as divers persons blinded with inordinate love of themselves have and yet do mistake the same, but rather was made and intended against all sorts and kinds of usury as a thing unlawful; and yet, nevertheless, the same was by the said act permitted for the avoiding of a more ill and inconvenience that before that time was used and exercised." "But, forasmuch," it is

added, “as usury is by the word of God utterly prohibited, as a vice most odious and detestable, as in divers places of the Holy Scripture it is evident to be seen, which thing by no godly teachings and persuasions can sink into the hearts of divers greedy, uncharitable, and covetous persons of this realm, nor yet, by any terrible threatenings of God’s wrath and vengeance, that justly hangeth over this realm for the great and open usury therein daily used and practised, they will forsake such filthy gain and lucre, unless some temporal punishment be provided and ordained in that behalf;” it is enacted that the late statute be “utterly abrogate, void, and repealed,” and that whoever shall henceforth lend any sum of money “for any manner of usury, increase, lucre, gain, or interest, to be had, received, or hoped for,” over and above the sum so lent, shall forfeit the money, and shall besides suffer imprisonment, and make fine and ransom, at the king’s will and pleasure. The subsequent history of this act is very instructive. Like all attempts to force back or turn aside by statute the natural and ordinary course of human transactions, it wholly failed in accomplishing its object; and, like all laws that so aim at effecting what is impracticable, it only added to the evil it was designed to cure. Accordingly, after nearly twenty years’ trial of how it worked, we find the legislature, in 1571, declaring, in a new act (the 13th Eliz. c. 8), that “it hath not done so much good as it was hoped it should, *but rather the vice of usury hath much more exceedingly abounded.*” The new statute, therefore, repeals the said act of Edward VI., and revives the act of Henry VIII., allowing interest at ten per cent. And such continued to be the law throughout the remainder of the present period. Yet, strangely and absurdly enough, this act of 1571 is also entitled “An Act against Usury,” touching the iniquity of which it actually sermonises in the usual phraseology at the very moment of permitting and legalising it. The tenor of the principal enacting clause is as follows:—“And, forasmuch as *all* usury, being forbidden by the law of God, is sin, and detestable,” be it enacted that all exaction of

usury or interest, above the rate of ten per cent., shall be punished by the forfeiture of the whole sum so exacted. It would require dexterous casuistry to demonstrate that, if to take interest at eleven per cent. was a detestable sin, to take interest at ten per cent. was allowable. If there was to be a law against usury at all, however, the penalty here denounced against the said detestable sin was certainly not of objectionable severity, even with the addition made by a subsequent clause, that offenders against the act might be further punished and corrected in the spiritual court. But that provision, in fact, merely went to restrain the spiritual court from proceeding against usury when it did not exceed ten per cent., and was really therefore protective, and not penal.

The most important measure that was taken in relation to the foreign trade of the country by the government of Edward VI. was the abolition of the privileges of the Steelyard Company. We have in the two preceding Chapters given an account of the rise and nature of this famous association of the German or Hanseatic merchants resident in England, and have brought down their history to the treaty of Edward IV. with the Hanse Towns, in 1475. Since that date various causes, and especially the new direction given to European commerce by the discovery of the route by sea to India, had very greatly reduced the eminence of that once powerful confederacy. Antwerp had now far distanced Lubeck, and Hamburg, and Dantzig, in the race of commercial activity and prosperity; other trading associations had arisen in various countries, to share what was once almost the monopoly of the Hanseatic League; and, as order and good government had become everywhere better established, even individual merchants, in many cases, carried on their operations as successfully as any company. In England, however, the Hanse merchants of the Steelyard, from the privileges which they enjoyed under their ancient charters and more recent treaties, continued almost to monopolise certain branches of trade in which they were exempted from duties payable by other traders, and from their superior combination and capital were even some-

times enabled to engage in other branches with such advantages as nearly precluded all competition. Thus, on the stoppage of the direct trade with the Netherlands, in 1493, it is recorded that great quantities of Flemish manufactures were still imported into England by the merchants of the Steelyard from their own Hanse towns; and that this activity of the foreigners, in a trade from which they were themselves excluded, so enraged the native merchants that they incited the London journeymen and apprentices to rise in a tumult, in which they attacked and rifled the warehouses of the obnoxious Germans. In 1505, when Henry VII. granted a charter of incorporation to the Company of Merchant Adventurers of England, whose proper business was described to be to trade in woollen cloth of all kinds to the Netherlands, the merchants of the Steelyard, or Easterlings, as they were called, were expressly prohibited from interfering with that branch of commerce; and the aldermen or governors of the association were obliged to enter into a recognisance of two thousand marks that none of the members should carry any English cloth to the place of residence of the English Merchant Adventurers in the Low Countries. Disputes between the two rival interests, however, continued to arise from time to time; and, at last, in 1520, we find King Henry appointing commissioners to treat at Bruges with others to be appointed by the Hanse Towns, concerning the several privileges at any time granted to the Hanseatic League by the king or his predecessors; for the removal of the abuses, unjust usages, extensions, enlargements, restrictions, and other misinterpretations of their rights with which the Hanseatic merchants in England might be chargeable, and for the conclusion of a new treaty of commerce between England and the said Hanseatic League. What was the issue of this congress does not appear. Meanwhile the Merchant Adventurers, as they grew in wealth and power, became less disposed than ever to tolerate with patience either the irregular encroachments of the foreign company, or even the existence of its invidious privileges within their legal limits. The

first movement for the suppression of the Steelyard Company appears to have been made by an application of the Merchant Adventurers to the government about the close of the year 1551. An answer to this information having been given in by the aldermen and merchants of the Steelyard, both statements were put into the hands of the solicitor-general and the recorder of London—upon whose report the council, on the 23rd of February, 1552, resolved that the Steelyard merchants had forfeited their liberties, and should for the future be held to stand in regard to the duties upon their exports and imports upon the same footing with any other strangers. The alleged grounds of this decree, as we gather them partly from King Edward's Journal, partly from other accounts, appear to have been, that the charters of incorporation of the Steelyard Company were contrary to the laws of the realm; that, no particular persons or towns being mentioned in their grants of privileges, it was uncertain to what persons or towns the said privileges extended, by reason of which uncertainty the company admitted to their immunities whomsoever they pleased, to the great prejudice of the king's customs and to the common hurt of the realm; that they had been in the habit of colouring the goods of other foreigners, that is, of getting such goods passed through the Custom-house as their own; that the condition had been broken on which their privileges when formerly forfeited had been restored by Edward IV., namely, that English subjects should enjoy the like privileges in Prussia and other Hanseatic parts; that, whereas for a hundred years after the first pretended concession of their privileges, they used to transport no merchandise out of the realm, but only to their own countries, nor import any but from their own countries, they now not only conveyed English merchandise into the Netherlands, but also imported into England the merchandise of all foreign countries; and, lastly—which was no doubt a chief reason, though one rather stronger, it must be confessed, in policy than in law—that, from small beginnings, they had so increased their trade, that it now constituted almost the entire trade carried on by

foreigners in the kingdom;—they began, according to the statement in the king's Journal, by shipping not more than 8 pieces of cloth; then they sent out 100; then 1000; then 6000; till now there was exported in their name no less a quantity than 44,000 pieces, while no more than 1100 pieces were exported by all other foreigners together. Not much dependence, however, can be placed upon the correctness of these numbers. Other charges made against them, according to some accounts, though not mentioned by the king, were, that having for the last forty-five years had the sole control of the commerce of the kingdom, they had reduced the price of English wool so low as to 1s. 6d. per stone; and that they had likewise greatly depressed the home corn-market by the quantities of foreign grain they had imported. In addition to the native mercantile interest, therefore, they had arrayed against them the whole strength of the agricultural interest, including both the corn-grower and the wool-grower. The principal commodities which they were wont to import, besides grain, are stated to have been cordage and other naval stores, flax and hemp, linen cloth, wax, and steel.*

The immediate effect of the abolition of the privileges of the Steelyard merchants is said to have been, that the English Merchant Adventurers the same year shipped off for Flanders no less a quantity than 40,000 pieces of cloth. The abolition of their privileges, however, did not extinguish the community of the Hanse merchants in England. In 1554, after Queen Mary's marriage had established a more intimate connexion with the empire, their privileges were restored, on the request of the ambassadors of the Hanse towns. But it is affirmed, though the fact is not quite certain, that, after a year or two, they were again withdrawn. The Steelyard Company, at all events, seems never to have completely recovered

* See Strype's Eccles. Mem. iii. 77, &c., where are printed the entries respecting the affair of the Steelyard Company, from the Council Book.—Burnet, Hist. Ref. under 1552.—King Edward's Journal.—Wheeler's Treatise of Commerce, 1601.—Anderson's Hist. of Commerce, ii. 109, &c.

from its sudden unsettlement, as just related ; and, though it continued to subsist as a trading association throughout the greater part of the present period, its circumstances were those of a struggling and gradually declining body, till at last Elizabeth, in the year 1597, took advantage of a mandate issued by the Emperor Rodolph for shutting up all the factories of the English Merchant Adventurers in Germany, to direct the lord-mayor and sheriffs of London to shut up the house occupied by the merchants of the Steelyard, which put an end to the existence of the company. In this proceeding, although the queen made a show of acting on the principle of retaliation, and went through the form of demanding a revocation of the imperial decree before she took the final step in the business, she was very well pleased that her application was rejected, and that she was thus afforded a fair pretext on which to get rid of an association, the services of which, however useful they might have been in earlier times, the country no longer stood in need of. The company of late, indeed, had been only an annoyance and a source of strife : to the last the Hanse merchants, on the one hand, continued to clamour importunately for the renewal of their ancient privileges, while the Merchant Adventurers, on the other, were as incessantly exclaiming against the unfairness of any association of foreign traders being suffered to reside in the kingdom, and to interfere with its commerce at all. The time was certainly now come in which native capital and enterprise were quite vigorous enough to dispense with any foreign aid.

The trade that had been opened with Russia in 1553 was vigorously prosecuted in the reign of Mary, from which sovereign the Russia Company, as already noticed, obtained its charter of incorporation in 1554. By this charter Sebastian Cabot was appointed, during his life, the first governor of the company, which was authorised, to the exclusion of all other English subjects, to trade not only to all parts of the dominions of the Russian emperor, but to all other regions not already known to English merchants. The following year two more ships

were sent out, which sailed up the Dwina as far as Vologda, from which port Chancellor, who was in command, proceeded again to Moscow, and there arranged a commercial treaty with the Czar, in which all the usual privileges were accorded to the English traders. In 1556 the company again sent out two ships, which returned the same year, bringing along with them the two that had been frozen up in Lapland in 1553, in one of which was Sir Hugh Willoughby's body. They also brought an ambassador to the King and Queen of England from the Czar; but, the vessel in which he sailed being shipwrecked on the coast of Scotland, he lost nearly the whole of the valuable presents for their majesties of which he was the bearer. The next year four vessels were dispatched, one of which carried back the ambassador, and along with him Mr. Anthony Jenkinson, as agent for the company, the interests of which were afterwards greatly promoted by his exertions. After reaching Russia, Jenkinson set out on a voyage down the Volga to Astracan, from whence he crossed the Caspian Sea to Persia, and made his way to the city of Bokhara, or Boghar, as he calls it, which he found to be the resort of merchants not only from Russia, Persia, and India, but from Cathay or China, from which last country the journey occupied nine months. Jenkinson, whose object was to establish a trade between the company's Russian factories and Persia, returned from this journey in 1560, and, coming home to England the same year, published the first map of Russia that had ever been made.* He is said to have made no fewer than six subsequent voyages to Bokhara by the same route; yet the prospect of the trade which he thus opened to the company, Anderson remarks, "was dropped some few years after, and remained as if it had never been thought of, until the reign of King George II. in 1741, when it was revived by an act of parliament enabling the Russia Company to trade into Persia; upon which considerable quantities of raw silk were brought home by the very same way that

* See Jenkinson's Voyage in Purchas and Hakluyt.

Jenkinson took from Persia to Russia, and from thence to England." "Yet," adds the historian, "the continual troubles and ravages in Persia have since suspended the good effects of this law." In 1566 the Russia Company obtained from the Sophi of Persia immunity from tolls and customs for their merchandise in that kingdom, and full protection for their goods and persons. The same year also their charter was ratified by an act of parliament, said to have been the first English statute which established an exclusive mercantile corporation.* In 1571 Jenkinson went out to Russia with the appointment of ambassador from Queen Elizabeth to the Czar, and succeeded both in obtaining the restoration of the company's privileges, which the Czar had suspended, and in reinstating its affairs, which, from losses and mismanagement, had fallen into great disorder.

The event in the reign of Mary which most affected the foreign commerce of the country was the loss of Calais in 1558. This continental town, which England had held for two hundred and eleven years, however useless, or worse than useless a possession it might be, politically considered, was, as Anderson remarks, "extremely well situated for a staple port, to disperse, in more early times, the wool, lead, and tin, and in later times the woollen manufactures of England, into the inland countries of the Netherlands, France, and Germany." The staple for the above-mentioned articles of native produce was now transferred to Bruges, and helped somewhat to check the decline of that famous emporium, whose ancient grandeur had been for some time fast becoming pale under the overshadowing ascendancy of Antwerp.

We may consider as an indication of the growing internal trade of the country in this reign the passing of the first general statute for the repair of the highways (the 2 and 3 Phil. and Mary, c. 8). This act directs

* Of this act the title only is printed among the Statutes of the Realm:—"An Act for the Corporation of Merchant Adventurers for the Discovery of New Trades."

that two surveyors of the highways shall be annually elected in every parish, as is still done, and that the parishioners shall attend four days in every year for their repair with wains or carts, oxen, horses, or other cattle, and all other necessaries, and also able men with the same, according to the quantity of land occupied by each ; householders, cottagers, and others, not having land, if they be not hired labourers, by themselves or sufficient substitutes giving their personal work or travail. Upon this statute were founded all the highway acts that were subsequently passed before the introduction of tolls or turnpikes in the reign of Charles II. Of these there were six in all passed in the reign of Mary, and about nineteen in that of Elizabeth.

In the course of the long reign of Elizabeth the commerce and navigation of England may be said to have risen through the whole of the space that in the life of a human being would be described as intervening between the close of infancy and commencing manhood. It was the age of the vigorous boyhood and adolescence of the national industry, when, although its ultimate conquests were still afar off, the path that led to them was fairly and in good earnest entered upon, and every step was one of progress and buoyant with hope. In the busier scene, however, that now opens upon us, the crowd of recorded facts is too great to be marshalled within our limited space, and, passing over many things that would properly enter into a complete chronological deduction of our commerce from the point at which we are arrived, we must confine ourselves to a selection of a few of the most indicative particulars.

An act was passed by Elizabeth's first parliament (the stat. 1 Eliz. c. 13) which is remarkable for a liberality of view going far beyond the notions that were clung to by our commercial legislation in much later times. The preamble is a confession of the loss and inconvenience that had already avenged the interference of the legislature with the natural freedom of commerce by the introduction of the principle of what have been called the navigation laws. Since the making of those statutes pro-

hibiting the export or import of merchandise by English subjects in any but English ships, “other foreign princes,” says this recital, “finding themselves aggrieved with the said several acts, as thinking that the same were made to the hurt and prejudice of their country and navy, have made like penal laws against such as should ship out of their countries in any other vessels than of their several countries and dominions; by reason whereof there hath not only grown great displeasure between the foreign princes and the kings of this realm, but also the merchants have been sore grieved and endamaged.” The damage sustained by the merchants of course consisted in the monopoly freights they were obliged to pay for the carriage of their goods, the effect of which was to diminish trade by diminishing consumption, and a share in the pressure of which was borne by every consumer in the kingdom. The law was now so far relaxed that merchandise was allowed to be exported and imported in foreign bottoms upon the payment of aliens’ customs; and the two great companies of the Merchant Adventurers and the Merchants of the Staple were further empowered, twice in the year, to export goods from the river Thames in foreign vessels, on payment only of the ordinary duties.

Many particulars respecting the foreign commerce of England at the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth have been preserved by Ludovico Guicciardini (nephew of the great historian of Italy) in his Description of the Netherlands, which was written about this time. The Dutch, he tells us, were wont to import annually to Bruges upwards of 1200 sacks of English wool, worth 250,000 crowns. And “it is marvellous,” he adds, “to think of the vast quantity of drapery imported by the English into the Netherlands, being undoubtedly, one year with another, above 200,000 pieces of all kinds, which, at the most moderate rate of 25 crowns per piece, is 5,000,000 of crowns, or 10,000,000 of Dutch guilders (above 1,000,000*l.* sterling); so that these and other merchandise brought to us by the English, and carried from us to them, may make the annual amount to be

more than 12,000,000 of crowns, or 24,000,000 of guilders (about 2,400,000*l.* sterling), to the great benefit of both countries, neither of which could possibly, or not without the greatest damage, dispense with this their vast mutual commerce; of which the merchants on both sides are so sensible, that they have fallen into a way of insuring their merchandise from losses at sea by a joint contribution.”* These last words are said to be the earliest notice of marine insurance, which they would seem to imply was first adopted in the trade between the Netherlands and England. The magnitude of that trade, as here described, greatly surpasses any conjectural estimate of its extent which could reasonably have been hazarded from the common notions entertained of the general state of commerce at this date. In fact, if we take into account the difference in the value of money, there is probably no single country, not even the United States of America, with which England in the present day carries on a larger commerce than she appears, from this statement, to have done with the Netherlands nearly three hundred years ago.

Of all the great commercial towns of the Netherlands, Antwerp, as we have already stated, was at this time the most eminent. Exclusive of the French, who, next to the native merchants, were the most numerous class of resident traders, it contained, according to Guicciardini, above a thousand foreigners engaged in commerce, consisting of Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, Danes and other Easterlings, and English. His account of the commerce carried on by Antwerp with the British Islands is as follows:—“To England Antwerp sends jewels and precious stones, silver bullion, quicksilver, wrought silks, cloth of gold and silver, gold and silver thread, camblets, grograms, spices, drugs, sugar, cotton, cummin, galls, linens fine and coarse, serges, demi-ostades, tapestry, madder, hops in great quantities, glass, salt-fish, metallic and other mercerries of all sorts to a

* Translation in Macpherson’s Annals of Commerce, ii. 127.

great value, arms of all kinds, ammunition for war, and household furniture. From England Antwerp receives vast quantities of fine and coarse draperies, fringes and other things of that kind to a great value, the finest wool, excellent saffron in small quantities, a great quantity of lead and tin, sheep and rabbit skins without number, and various other sorts of fine peltry and leather, beer, cheese, and other sorts of provisions in great quantities ; also Malinesey wines, which the English import from Candia. To Scotland Antwerp sends but little, as that country is chiefly supplied from England and France : Antwerp, however, sends hither some spicery, sugars, madder, wrought silks, camblets, serges, linen, and mercery ; and Scotland sends to Antwerp vast quantities of peltry of many kinds, leather, wool, indifferent cloth, and fine large pearls, though not of quite so good a water as the Oriental ones. To Ireland Antwerp sends much the same commodities and quantities as to Scotland ; and Antwerp takes from Ireland skins and leather of divers sorts, some low-priced cloths, and other gross things of little value." This minute, complete, and authentic account of the chief branch of our national commerce must be regarded as one of the most curious and instructive records of the present period.

From other parts of Guicciardini's description of Antwerp, a few additional particulars may be gleaned of interest in the history of English commerce. The English Bourse or Exchange was the place where the merchants of the several nations that were congregated in this great mart used to meet for an hour every morning and evening, to buy and sell all kinds of merchandise, with the assistance of their interpreters and brokers. The English cloths, stuffs, and wool brought to Antwerp were exported thence to Venice, Naples, Milan, Florence, Genoa, and other parts of Italy ; English cloths were sent to Germany "as a rare and curious thing, and of high price." Large quantities of the same merchandise also went to Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Eastland, Livonia, and Poland ; some to France ; and a small portion also to Spain. To the last-mentioned country, indeed, is stated

to have been sent everything produced by human industry and labour ; " to which," says Guicciardini, " the meaner people of Spain have an utter aversion." A considerable quantity of English wool, however, probably still continued to be exported direct from England to Spain, and was there worked up into finer fabrics than the looms of this country could yet produce.

A memorable branch of English commerce is believed to have begun in the year 1562—the detestable African slave-trade. It is related that Mr. John Hawkins—the same who under the name of Sir John Hawkins was afterwards so distinguished as a naval commander—having learned that negroes brought a very good price in Hispaniola, assisted by subscriptions of sundry gentlemen, now fitted out three ships, of which the largest was 120 tons, the smallest only 40, and, proceeding to the coast of Guinea, there made up his cargo with human beings, and sailed with them to Hispaniola, where he sold his Africans and his English goods, and, loading his ships with hides, sugar, ginger, and many pearls, returned home the next year, having made a very prosperous adventure. Other two voyages of the same kind are recorded to have been made by Hawkins, who, in commemoration of his priority over all his countrymen in this line of enterprise, received as an addition to his arms " a demi-moor proper, bound with a cord :" but we do not hear much more of the African slave-trade as carried on by the English, till after the close of the present period.

It was in the year 1566 that the building of the Royal Exchange, in the city of London, was begun by the famous Sir Thomas Gresham, styled the queen's merchant, according to Anderson, " because he had the management of all her remittances, and her other money concerns with foreign states, and with her armies beyond sea." Before this the merchants of London used to meet in Lombard-street, in the open air. Sir Thomas was the son of Sir Richard Gresham, also an eminent London merchant, who is said to have been the original author of the project of building an exchange or covered

walk for the merchants of his native capital, similar to what he had seen in Antwerp and other foreign cities, but who died before he could carry his design into execution. His son received a university education, having studied at Caius (or, as it was then called, Gonville) College, Cambridge, but was from the first intended by his father for a commercial life, and accordingly became a member of the Mercers' Company, the same to which Sir Richard himself, and also his brother Sir John Gresham, belonged. Sir Thomas was employed, as his father had been, in negotiating foreign loans, and managing other money transactions, by Edward VI., and enjoyed the distinguished favour both of that king and of his successors, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, from the latter of whom he received his knighthood in 1559. Ten years after, by his advice, the experiment was first tried of raising a loan for the crown at home, instead of resorting, as had always hitherto been done, to foreign capitalists; and from that time the new plan continued usually to be followed, to the great advantage both of the crown and of the public. Sir Thomas proposed to the lord mayor and citizens of London to erect a commodious building for the merchants to meet in, at his own charge, provided they would find him a site; and, his offer being at once accepted, a piece of ground, then covered with three streets, called New-alley, Swan-alley, and St. Christopher's-alley, was purchased for 353*l.* The houses, it is related, about eighty in number, being cried by a bellman, and sold to persons who agreed to take them down and carry away the materials, brought the sum of 478*l.*; after which the ground was levelled at the charge of the city, and possession of it given by the lord mayor and aldermen to Gresham, who laid the first stone of the new building on the 7th of June, 1566; and by November of the following year the edifice, which was of brick, was covered with a roof of slate. It was at first called the *Bourse* or *Burse*; but in 1570, soon after it was finished, as Holinshed tell us, "the three-and-twentieth of January, the queen's majesty, accompanied with her nobility, came from her house at the Strand,

called Somerset Place, and entered the city of London by Temple Bar, Fleet-street, Cheap, and so, by the north side of the Burse, to Sir Thomas Gresham's in Bishopsgate-street, where she dined : after dinner her grace returned through Cornhill, entered the Burse on the south side, and, after her highness had viewed every part thereof aboveground, especially the Pawn, which was richly furnished with all sorts of the finest wares in the city, she caused the same Burse, by an herald and a trumpet, to be proclaimed the Royal Exchange, so to be called from thenceforth, and not otherwise." Gresham, by his will, devised the Exchange which he had thus erected in equal shares to the corporation of London and to the Mercers' Company, and so the property continues to be held to the present day. The original building, a quadrangular arcade surrounding an open court, with galleries above containing shops, &c., perished in the great fire of 1666 ; after which the stone building on a more extensive scale, that was a few years ago burnt down, was erected by the city and the Mercers' Company, at a cost of 80,000*l.* Sir Thomas Gresham, who died in 1579, and who, as we have seen, was a scholar as well as a merchant, is also illustrious as the founder of the civic college known by his name, originally established in his house in Bishopsgate-street, which stood where the Excise Office now stands.

In 1567 the series of voyages of discovery, chiefly undertaken in pursuit of a new passage to India, which illustrates the reign of Elizabeth, commenced with the first voyage of Martin Frobisher, who entered upon his adventurous expedition with two barks of only twenty-five tons each, and a pinnace of ten tons ; in the fitting out of which he was assisted by several persons of rank, and especially by Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick (elder brother of Leicester). The government, however, and Queen Elizabeth herself, also took a warm interest in the expedition, upon which the sanguine and intrepid commander is said to have set out with a determination either to discover the north-west passage, or to perish in the attempt. Frobisher and his companions

sailed from Deptford on the 8th of June; the queen, who was then at Greenwich, looking on from a window of the palace as they passed by, and waving her hand to them by way of expressing her good wishes and bidding them farewell. Proceeding along the eastern coast, they reached Fara, one of the Shetland Islands, from whence they directed their course westward till they came within sight of the coast of Greenland, upon which, however, they were not able to effect a landing. After this Frobisher entered the strait leading to Hudson's Bay which still bears his name, and landed on some of the adjacent coasts, which he took possession of for the English crown. The loss of some of his men, however, now made him resolve to return home; and, after encountering a terrible storm, he arrived at Harwich on the 2nd of October. A circumstance that happened some years after the return of this expedition suddenly produced a general excitement respecting it, much greater than had been awakened by the geographical discoveries in which it had resulted. Among other specimens of the produce of the lands he had added to the queen's dominions, Frobisher had brought home with him a piece of heavy black stone, a fragment of which the wife of a person into whose hands it had fallen threw into the fire, when, being taken out again, and quenched in vinegar, it glittered like gold, and, it is said, was afterwards, upon being fused, actually found to contain a portion of that metal. As soon as this was known numbers of people eagerly offered their subscriptions to enable Frobisher to proceed on a second expedition; the queen herself placing at his disposal one of the ships of the royal navy, of two hundred tons burden. With this, and two barks of about thirty tons each, he again set out from Harwich on the 31st of May, 1577. This time no further attempt was made to penetrate to India: the adventurers had been expressly commanded to make the collection of gold-ore their only object; and, accordingly, after having reached Frobisher's Strait, as before, and found a quantity of the black stone on some of the islands where they landed, they prepared to return to England,

which they reached in the end of September. Commissioners were now appointed by the queen to report on the whole affair ; and, although it does not appear that anything could be got out of the pieces of black stone, it was still deemed expedient that another expedition should be sent out, either to make search for more genuine specimens of gold ore, or at least to prosecute the pursuit of the north-west passage, of which the discovery of Frobisher's Strait had appeared to open a prospect. Accordingly, on the 31st of May, 1578, Frobisher again sailed from Harwich with twelve ships in addition to the three he had commanded on his last voyage, that he might bring or send home an abundant importation of the black ore. This attempt, however, proved wholly unsuccessful ; it was only after having been carried far out of their course by storms and currents that about half the number of the ships at last reached the mouth of the strait, when the season was too far advanced for a longer continuance in these inclement regions ; so that, having collected as much of the black stone as he could find, Frobisher, without having added anything to his former discoveries, again set sail for England, which he reached about the beginning of October. It is unnecessary to say that the supposed ore appears to have only proved another exemplification of the truth of the old remark—that all is not gold that glitters. To Frobisher, however, geography owes the first penetration into these Polar seas, and the discovery both of the strait that bears his name, and of various islands, sounds, and points within and around it. Frobisher was afterwards employed in other naval commands, and was one of the chief captains of the fleet fitted out against the Spanish Armada ; after one of the engagements with which his valour was recompensed by the lord high admiral with the honour of knighthood. He died in 1594 of a wound which he received in an attack upon a fort near Brest, which was held by a party of leaguers and Spaniards against Henry IV. of France, to whose assistance he had been sent with four men-of-war.

At the same time that Frobisher was engaged in his third and last expedition of discovery in the seas to the north of the American continent, the celebrated Francis Drake was performing the second circumnavigation of the globe; the first having been accomplished more than half a century before by the Portuguese navigator Fernando de Magalhães, the discoverer of the strait which still bears his name. We need not advert here to the political circumstances in which Drake's enterprise originated; there is little doubt that it had the secret sanction of Elizabeth, although its primary object was to attack the possessions and plunder the ships of the Spaniards, with whom this country was then at peace. The vessels employed were the property of private individuals, friends of Drake; they were five in number, the largest, the Pelican, in which the commander of the expedition sailed, being of a hundred tons burden; the smallest, a pinnace of fifteen tons; and, including several gentlemen, the younger sons of noble families, the entire number of persons whom they carried was only one hundred and sixty-four. The little fleet sailed from Plymouth on the 15th of November, 1577. After making the coast of Brazil and entering the Rio de la Plata, Drake's ship and two others had passed through the Strait of Magalhães, or Magellan, by the beginning of September, 1578. The southern coast of Tierra del Fuego was afterwards discovered by Drake, who then ran up along the western coast of America, as far as to latitude 48° north, collecting, at the same time, immense booty by a succession of exploits against the Spaniards, the relation of which does not belong to our present subject. Drake was the first navigator who had ever advanced to nearly so high a latitude along the North American coast. He afterwards sailed across the Pacific to the Molucca Islands and Java, and, steering thence for the Cape of Good Hope, finished his voyage round the world by returning to Plymouth, which he reached on Monday the 26th of September, 1580, after an absence of nearly two years and ten months. "The queen," says Camden, "received him graciously, and

laid up the treasure he brought by way of sequestration, that it might be forthcoming if the Spaniard should demand it. His ship she caused to be drawn up in a little creek near Deptford, upon the Thames, as a monument of his so lucky sailing round the world, where the carcass thereof is yet to be seen. And, having, as it were, consecrated it as a memorial with great ceremony, she was banqueted in it, and conferred on Drake the honour of knighthood. At this time a bridge of planks, by which they came aboard the ship, sunk under the crowd of people, and fell down with an hundred men upon it, who, notwithstanding, had none of them any harm. So that that ship may seem to have been built under a lucky planet." Drake's ship was preserved at Deptford till it was quite decayed; and at last, when it was broken up, a chair was made of one of the planks, and presented to the University of Oxford. As for the treasure brought home by the great navigator, it is probable that, although a considerable sum was afterwards paid out of it in satisfaction of claims made in the name of some Spanish merchants, the greater part of it was divided among the captors. Camden goes on to tell us that, although the common people admired and highly commended Drake, as judging it no less honourable to have enlarged the bounds of the name and glory than of the empire of their country, yet "nothing troubled him more than that some of the chief men at court refused to accept the gold which he offered them as gotten by piracy." The queen, however, stood firmly by him, and, when Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, complained in passionate terms of his having so much as dared to sail in the Indian Sea, she boldly replied, that she understood not why her subjects, or those of any other prince, should be debarred from the Indies (that is, the Americas), to which she could not admit that the Spaniard had any just title, either by the Bishop of Rome's donation or by any other claim. She maintained that no imaginary right of property, asserted either by the Spaniards or the Portuguese, could hinder other princes from trading to those countries, and, without any breach of the law of nations,

from transporting colonies into such parts of them as were not already settled. Nor, she concluded, could she or any other prince be with any reason prevented from freely navigating that vast ocean, seeing the use of the sea and air is common to all ; "neither can a title to the ocean belong to any people or private persons, forasmuch as neither nature nor public use and custom permitteth any possession thereof." This high tone, never before so distinctly taken by the English government, and never afterwards lowered, was mainly inspired by Drake's brilliant exploits.

The next voyages of discovery that fall to be mentioned after Drake's circumnavigation are the three made by John Davis in quest of a north-west passage : the first in 1585, in which he sailed as far north as the 73rd degree of latitude, and discovered the strait to which he has left his name ; the second in 1586, in which he made the attempt to penetrate to the Pacific at a point farther to the south ; the third in 1587, in which he again ascended the strait he had discovered two years before, with no better success than at first. In these attempts Davis was encouraged and assisted, not only by several members of the mercantile community, but by Burleigh, Walsingham, and others of the queen's ministers and the nobility.

Meanwhile another voyage round the world was performed by another Englishman, Mr. Thomas Cavendish, the son of a gentleman of property in Suffolk, who sailed from Plymouth with three vessels on the 21st of July, 1586, and, after a course both of navigation and of hostilities against the Spaniards strongly resembling that pursued by Drake, finished his circumnavigation by returning to the same port on the 9th of September, 1588, having thus been absent little more than two years and one month. This voyage, however, was not productive of any geographical discoveries of importance, though it corrected some of the statements of preceding navigators. In a second South-Sea voyage, undertaken by Cavendish in 1591, Captain John Davis, mentioned above, who commanded one of the ships, had the fortune to discover

the Falkland Islands.* Other South-Sea voyages, made by Andrew Merrick in 1589, and by Sir Richard Hawkins in 1593, added little or nothing to geographical knowledge ; and the same may be said of the voyage for the discovery of a north-west passage, undertaken in 1602, by Captain George Weymouth, at the joint expense of the Russia and Turkey companies.

By this time, also, a direct commercial intercourse with India had been opened by the English. In 1581 a number of eminent merchants were incorporated into a company for trading to Turkey, to which country the charter declared that they had, at their own great costs and charges, found out and opened a trade "not heretofore in the memory of any man now living known to be commonly used and frequented by way of merchandise." Wishing to engage in the trade to India, this company, in 1583, dispatched Messrs. Newbury and Fitch to Tripoli in Syria, from which they proceeded to Bagdad, and thence down the Tigris and the Persian Gulf to Ormus, where they embarked for Goa. Newbury died in India, but Fitch, after having visited Agra, Bengal, Pegu, Ceylon, and Cochin, returning by Goa, Ormus, and Aleppo, arrived again in England in April, 1591. A trade, however, carried on by this overland route, could never have enabled the English merchants to compete with their Portuguese rivals ; and before Fitch's return this had come to be generally felt. It appears that, in 1589, a petition was presented to the queen from sundry merchants, requesting permission to make a trading adventure to India by sea. On the 10th of April, 1591, nearly at the very moment at which Fitch made his reappearance, three ships, fitted out by the chief members of the Turkey Company, sailed from Plymouth for the Cape of Good Hope, one of which, commanded by Captain Lancaster, after suffering many disasters, reached India, and took in a cargo of pepper and other spices at Sumatra and Ceylon. But, having afterwards set out for the West Indies, Lancaster there lost his ship,

* See Burney's Discoveries in the South Sea, vol. ii. p. 103.

and was left with his crew on the uninhabited island of Mona, near Hispaniola, from which he was brought home to Europe by a French vessel in May, 1594, after having been absent about three years and two months. Three other ships, sent out for India and China in 1596 by Sir Robert Dudley and some other London merchants, were still more unfortunate. Meanwhile the war with Spain and Portugal had cut off the usual supply of Oriental productions by the medium of the latter country, in consequence of which the price of pepper is said to have been raised from three to eight shillings per pound, and the prices of other commodities in the same proportion, none being to be had except from the Dutch, who had gone into the India trade in 1595, and were already carrying it on with great success. In 1599 the merchants of the Turkey Company made another attempt to establish a land trade with India by dispatching a Mr. Mildenhall to the court of the Great Mogul at Agra; but he did not reach that capital till the year 1603, and, although he afterwards obtained important commercial privileges for the company from the Mohammedan emperor, his proceedings do not belong to the history of the present period. In the mean time the scheme of an East India trade, to be carried on by sea, and independently of the Turkey Company, had at last been taken up with effect. On the 22nd of September, 1599, the lord mayor, aldermen, and principal merchants of London, to the number of about a hundred, assembled at Founders' Hall, and united themselves into an association for trading to India, for which purpose they subscribed on the spot a capital of above 30,000*l.* At a subsequent meeting they drew up a petition to the privy council, in which they represented that, stimulated by the success which had attended the voyages to the East Indies already made by the Dutch, who were then fitting out another voyage, for which they had bought ships in England, the associated merchants had resolved upon making a voyage of adventure of the same kind, and for that purpose entreated that her majesty would grant them letters patent of incorporation, succession, &c., seeing that the proposed trade,

being so remote, could not be managed but by a joint and united stock. This movement led, after a delay occasioned by the prospect of a peace with Spain, to the grant by the queen, on the 31st of December, 1600, of a charter to a great number of gentlemen therein named, constituting them one body corporate and politic, by the name of "The Governor and Company of the Merchants of London trading into the East Indies;" Mr. Thomas Smith, alderman of London, one of the leading members of the Turkey Company, being appointed the first governor. The charter, among other privileges, conferred the exclusive right of trading, for fifteen years, to all parts of Asia, Africa, and America, beyond the Cape of Good Hope eastward as far as to the Strait of Magellan, excepting such countries or ports as might be in the actual possession of any Christian prince in amity with the queen. The new company lost no time in sending out their first adventure. Four ships, the best that could be found in England, although the largest was only of six hundred tons burden, the smallest of not more than two hundred and forty tons, and carrying in all four hundred and eighty men, having been put under the command of Lancaster, who was styled Admiral of the little fleet, and was invested by the queen with the power of exercising martial law, dropped down from Woolwich on the 13th of February, 1601, but did not take their departure from Torbay till the 22nd of April, and did not reach Acheen, in Sumatra, till the 5th of June in the following year. In consequence of the time thus lost Lancaster did not return home till after the death of Elizabeth, so that the history of all but the mere opening of the commerce of the English with India belongs to the next period.*

A beginning was also made in the latter part of the present reign in the attempt to effect settlements in some of the newly discovered parts of the earth, although the proper foundation of the colonial empire of England must be referred to a later date. In 1576 Sir Humphrey

* Macpherson's History of the European Commerce with India, 4to. 1812, pp. 72—82.

Gilbert (half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh) had published a treatise on the subject of the north-west passage, and, two years after, had obtained a patent, empowering him to occupy and colonise such parts of the North American continent as were not already in the possession of any of the queen's allies. Gilbert, accordingly, accompanied by Raleigh, made an attempt the same year to carry his project into execution ; but he had not long put out to sea when he was obliged to return with the loss of one of his best ships. No better success attended a second attempt of the two brothers in 1583 : after having reached Newfoundland, Gilbert, who has been called "the father of our plantations," perished with his ship in a storm on his voyage home ; and, of four other vessels of which the expedition consisted, only one reached England. The next year, however, Raleigh, not discouraged by this disastrous failure, having obtained letters patent from the queen, granting to him all such countries as he should discover in full property, with the reservation only to the crown of a fifth part of the gold or silver ore that might be found in them, again fitted out two ships, and dispatched them to the North American coast, with directions to take a more southerly course than that which had been followed by Gilbert. The result of this voyage was the discovery of the part of the American continent which Elizabeth honoured, in allusion to herself, with the name of Virginia.* Raleigh's patent was now confirmed by act of parliament, and, early in 1585, he sent out another fleet of seven vessels, under the conduct of his relative, Sir Richard Grenville, a most distinguished person, alike as a seaman and as a soldier, to take complete possession of and effect a settlement on the newly acquired territory. Grenville actually left a colony of one hundred and eight men on the island of Roanoak, adjacent to the coast of Virginia ; but scarcely had the ships that brought them out taken their departure when the settlers became involved in hostilities with the natives, in consequence of which they were

* Virginia originally comprehended both the present state of that name and the adjoining country of North Carolina.

glad to embark in the fleet of Sir Francis Drake, who chanced to touch at the place on his return from another expedition against the Spanish possessions, and who brought them home to England about the end of July, 1586.* Within a fortnight after they had sailed, Grenville arrived with three ships laden with all necessaries, which Raleigh had dispatched for their use, and, finding them gone, he left fifteen men in the place with provisions for two years. When the next year Raleigh sent out three more vessels, with a governor, Mr. John White, and twelve assistants, to whom he gave a charter, incorporating them by the name of the Governor and Assistants of the City of Raleigh in Virginia, no remains of these unhappy settlers were to be found, except their bones scattered on the beach : they had all been put to death by the savages. An attempt was made by White and his companions to repair the buildings which had been laid in ruins ; but new hostilities with the natives, and dissensions among the settlers themselves, soon arose, and the governor eventually determined upon returning for further supplies to England, where he arrived in the beginning of November. At this moment the public mind in England was occupied with one object—the grand Spanish armament that was already afloat for the invasion of the kingdom ; Raleigh himself was busy among the foremost in devising the necessary arrangements for the national defence ; he found means, in the first instance, to send back White with supplies in two

* “ These men,” says Camden, “ who were thus brought back, were the first that I know of that brought into England that Indian plant which they call *tabacca* and *nicotia*, or tobacco, which they used against crudities, being taught it by the Indians. Certainly from that time forward it began to grow into great request, and to be sold at a high rate, whilst in a short time many men everywhere, some for wantonness, some for health sake, with insatiable desire and greediness, sucked in the stinking smoke thereof through an earthen pipe, which presently they blew out again at their nostrils ; insomuch that tobacco-shops are now as ordinary in most towns as tap-houses and taverns.”

vessels, which, however, were attacked by a Spanish privateer, and so much disabled as to be incapable of proceeding on their voyage; but after this no further attempt was made to relieve the unhappy colonists of Virginia, who, men, women, and children, to the number of nearly a hundred and twenty, that had been left by White, must all speedily have perished of want if they were not destroyed by the tomahawks of the barbarous aborigines upon whose wilderness they had intruded. And thus terminated the work of colonization as prosecuted by the English in the reign of Elizabeth.

We will now add a few notices respecting the navy and commercial shipping of the kingdom in this reign. Very soon after she came to the throne, Camden tells us, "this wise and careful princess, in order to prevent any hostile attempts, and secure herself and her subjects in the fruition of a settled peace, though her treasure ran low, yet began to stock her arinoury with all necessary ammunition, expending a vast sum for arms in Germany, because those she bought up at Antwerp were stopped by the Spaniard." She also, he adds, caused a great number of iron and brass pieces to be cast; and in this she was aided by the discovery both of great abundance of calamine, or zinc, in different parts of England, and of a vein of copper near Keswick, in Cumberland, so rich that it afforded a sufficient supply not only for the home demand, but for exportation. She likewise introduced the manufacture of gunpowder, and made the military service popular by raising the pay of the soldiers. Further, the historian goes on, "she rigged out her fleet with all manner of tackling and ammunition, so that it may be allowed to have been the best equipped navy that was ever set out by the English. For the defence whereof she built a castle on the banks of the Medway near Upnore, the usual harbour for the fleet, and augmented the sailors' and mariners' pay; so that she was justly styled by strangers the Restorer of the Naval Glory, and the Queen of the North Seas. Neither had she occasion to hire ships from Hamburgh, Lubeck, Dantzig, Genoa, and Venice, which was her predecessors'

case. The wealthier inhabitants of the sea-coasts did likewise follow the queen's example in building ships of war with all imaginable cheerfulness, insomuch that in a little time the queen's fleet, in conjunction with her subjects' shipping, was so potent that it was able to furnish out twenty thousand fighting men for sea service." The ships thus built by private individuals were of course merchant-ships, though liable to be pressed into the public service in cases of emergency. In 1572 it is stated that the entire navy of England consisted of 146 vessels of all sizes, of which 1 carried a hundred guns, 9 from eighty-eight to sixty, 49 from fifty-eight to forty, 58 from thirty-eight to twenty, and the remaining 29 from eighteen to six.* Of these, however, only 13 belonged to the crown; the rest consisted of the mercantile shipping of the country, which was still esteemed the principal part of its maritime force. In the year 1582 the English merchantmen are said to have been 135 in number, many of them being of 500 tons burthen. The fleet equipped to encounter the Spanish Armada, in 1588, consisted, according to the most authentic account, of 117 ships, having on board 11,120 men.† Of these vessels eighteen are stated to have been merchant adventurers from the river Thames, but of the rest by far the greater number must have been merchantmen hired or pressed for the occasion. Another account makes the entire number of ships to have been 181; namely, 34 men-of-war, of which five were from 800 to 1100 tons burthen each; the 18 private adventurers; 33 furnished by the city of London; 43 hired ships; and 53 coasters, sent by various sea-ports.‡ These last seem to be omitted in the other enumeration. According to a work published in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the writer of which appears to have derived much of his information from Pepys, the then Secretary of the Admi-

* Burchet's History of Transactions at Sea, as quoted by Anderson.

† Original List in the State Paper Office, as quoted in Tytler's Life of Raleigh, p. 84.

‡ Burghley, State Papers, ii. 615, &c.

rality (and author of the well-known Diary), Queen Elizabeth in 1588 had at sea 150 sail of ships, of which only 40 were the property of the crown.* Besides the 110 hired vessels, however, the mercantile shipping of the kingdom amounted to 150 sail, measuring on an average 150 tons, and carrying 40 seamen each. Each of the queen's own ships carried about 300 men, and each of those hired by her about 110. It is added that, by the end of the reign,^{*} both the quantity of the shipping and the number of the seamen belonging to the kingdom had increased about a third. According to an account presented by the Navy Office in 1791, in obedience to an order of the House of Commons, the royal navy amounted in 1547, at the end of the reign of Henry VIII., to 12,455 tons; in 1553, at the end of the reign of Edward VI., to 11,065; in 1558, at the end of the reign of Mary, to 7110; and in 1603, at the end of the reign of Elizabeth, to 17,110. The largest of Queen Elizabeth's ships at her death is said to have measured 1000 tons, and to have carried 340 seamen, and 40 cannon.

A new species of maritime adventure in which the English began to engage in the reign of Elizabeth was the whale-fishery. Hakluyt, under the year 1575, reports the "request of an honest merchant, by letter to a friend of his, to be advised and directed in the course of killing the whale;" with the friend's answer, stating that there ought to be provided a ship of 200 tons burthen, with proper utensils and instruments, and that all the necessary hands were to be obtained from Biscay, the people of which country appear to have been, with the exception perhaps of the inhabitants of some of the most northern regions, the earliest whale-fishers in Europe.

* Happy Future State of England, fol. Lon. 1689, p. 127. For these statements the author quotes a remonstrance of the Corporation of the Trinity House, in 1602, to the Lord High Admiral the Earl of Nottingham, extant in Sir Julius Cæsar's Collections. The author of the Happy Future State of England has been said to be James Annesley, Earl of Anglesey; according to another account, the work was written by Sir Peter Pet.

The first notice in Hakluyt of any actual whale-fishing by the English occurs under the date of 1593, in which year it is stated that some English ships made a voyage to Cape Breton to fish for morse and whales ; and before the close of the century we find the ships of the Russia Company engaged occasionally in fishing for whales in the seas in the neighbourhood of Spitzbergen. It appears that the oil was the only thing for which the whale was then valued—at least there is no mention at this early date of any trade in the fins or whalebone.

In 1577, according to Hakluyt, the ships engaged in the Newfoundland fishery were 150 from France, 100 from Spain, 50 from Portugal, and 15 from England ; the Biscayans had also 20 or 30 ships engaged in the whale-fishery ; but the English, he says, had the best ships, and therefore gave the law to the rest, and were their protectors in the bays from pirates and other intruders, for which it was then, and had been of old, a custom to make them a sort of acknowledgment by a boat-load of salt or other present of that nature. The ships of the Spaniards were the next best to those of the English. Hakluyt accounts for the small number of the English ships that resorted to Newfoundland by the number employed in the Iceland fishery.

A new mercantile company was incorporated by Elizabeth in 1579, by the name of the Fellowship of Eastland Merchants, with the exclusive right of trading to Norway, Sweden, Poland, Prussia, and all the other countries along the coasts of the Baltic. "This," says Anderson, "was what is called in England a regulated company—that is, a company trading, not on a joint stock, but every one on his separate bottom, under certain regulations." The exclusive privileges of this association were extinguished at the Revolution by the act called the Declaration of Rights ; but in Anderson's time the Eastland Merchants, and also the Merchants of the Staple, who were similarly circumstanced, continued to exist in name, and to elect their annual officers—their capital being reduced to a small stock in the public funds, the interest of which defrayed the expenses of their yearly meetings.

The once famous South Sea Company, of which this writer was one of the officers, is now reduced to the same condition of a merely nominal existence.

We have seen the rise of Antwerp, soon after the commencement of the present period, to the rank of being the most eminent commercial city in the world—the principal impulse which carried it to this height being originally derived from the opening of the Portuguese trade by sea with India. In 1585 the capture and sack of this great emporium by the Spanish commander, the Duke of Parma, gave a shock to the whole system of European commerce. About six thousand of the inhabitants perished in the devastation of their noble and opulent city; and of the survivors of its fall the greater number of those whose wealth, enterprise, and industry had hitherto chiefly sustained it, fled from its ensanguined streets and blackened ruins. To quote the compendious summary of Anderson,—“The ruin of this famous city gave the finishing blow to the commerce of the Spanish Netherlands. The fishing-trade removed into Holland. The noble manufactures of Flanders and Brabant were dispersed into different countries. The woollen manufacture settled mostly in Leyden, where it still flourishes. The linen removed to Haerlem and Amsterdam. About a third part of the manufacturers and merchants who wrought and dealt in silks, damasks, taffeties, bayes, sayes, serges, stockings, &c., settled in England, because England was then ignorant of those manufactures.” The rise, indeed, of the manufacturing industry of this country may be said to date from the fall of Antwerp. In commercial importance Amsterdam now became what Antwerp had been, the grand emporium of Europe.

A curious evidence of how much the internal trade of England was still dependent upon the periodical fairs or markets held in the great towns is afforded by a proclamation issued in 1593, prohibiting the holding of Bartholomew fair in the usual manner for that year in consequence of the plague being then in London. The proclamation speaks of there being wont to be a general resort to the fair of all kinds of people out of every part

of the realm, who would therefore carry the sickness back with them over the whole country, if the fair were to be kept as usual. It was too necessary, however, to the public convenience to be altogether suppressed even for a single year: all that was attempted, therefore, was to establish certain regulations with the object of diminishing, as much as possible, the concourse of people, or the danger thence arising. These regulations give a good view of what Bartholomew fair was two hundred and fifty years ago. Her majesty commands, “That, in the usual place of Smithfield, there be no manner of market for any wares kept, nor any stalls or booths for any manner of merchandise, or for victuals, suffered to be set up; but that the open place of the ground called Smithfield be only occupied with the sale of horses and cattle, and of stall wares, as butter, cheese, and such like, in gross, and not by retail; the same to continue for two days only. And, for vent of woollen cloths, kerseys, and linen cloths, to be all sold in gross, and not by retail, the same shall be all brought within the Close Yard [afterwards called the Cloth Fair] of St. Bartholomew’s, where shops are there continued, and have gates to shut the same place in the nights, and there such cloth to be offered for sale, and to be bought in gross, and not by retail; the same market to continue but three days. And that the sale and vent for leather be kept in the outside of the ring in Smithfield, as hath been accustomed, without erecting any shops or booths for the same, or for any victualler or other occupier of any ways whatsoever.” From this we may gather that Bartholomew fair was in those days a great annual mart to which merchants used to come up from the various parts of the country, and perhaps from other countries, to make their wholesale purchases, just as some of the continental fairs still are. The object of the regulations was to prevent the holding of the retail market, by which, of course, the crowd of visitors was chiefly attracted; but the wholesale market was too indispensable to the general trade of the country to be interfered with.

Our space will only allow us to add a few out of many

particulars that have been preserved relating to the commerce of Scotland during the present period. In the early part of the period commercial legislation in that country was directed by the same spirit and to the same objects as in England. Thus, among the acts passed by the first parliament of James IV., in 1488, was one enforcing the importation of a certain quantity of money by every merchant exporting Scottish commodities: wool, cloth, salmon, and herrings are the descriptions of native produce and manufactures that are specified as being wont to be sent abroad. At this time the general tendency of the laws that were made was rather to check than encourage foreign trade. This same parliament, by another act, prohibited vessels coming from abroad, whether foreign or belonging to the country, from putting in at any other ports than those of what are called the free burghs, of which Dunbarton, Irvine, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Renfrew—all in the western part of the country—are mentioned as the chief; and further made it illegal for foreigners to carry on any trade whatever except at the said burghs. Foreign merchants were also expressly prohibited from buying any fish in Scotland till they were salted and barrelled. The navy of Scotland at this time appears to have consisted of only two vessels, the Flower and the Yellow Carvel. "They were adapted," observes Macpherson, "chiefly for war, being well provided with guns, crossbows, lime-pots, fire-balls, two-handed swords, and also with good seamen, under the command of Sir Andrew Wood, a brave and experienced officer; but I cannot venture to affirm whether they belonged to the public or were Wood's own private property." In the course of his reign, however, James made great efforts to raise the maritime power of his kingdom; and we afterwards find the list of his distinguished naval commanders increased by the names of the two Bartons (father and son), Alexander Mathisson, William Merrimouth of Leith, styled King of the Sea, and others. The ships in which these adventurers sailed, however, appear to have been for the most part their own property. A later writer has drawn

a glowing picture of the naval eminence to which their exertions and the fostering patronage of the king raised their country : “ They were encouraged to extend their voyages, to arm their trading vessels, to purchase foreign ships of war, to import cannon, and to superintend the building of ships of force at home. In these cases the monarch not only took an interest, but studied the subject with his usual enthusiasm, and personally superintended every detail. He conversed with his mariners,—rewarded the most skilful and assiduous by presents,—visited familiarly at the houses of his principal merchants and sea-officers,—practised with his artillerymen, often discharging and pointing the guns,—and delighted in embarking on short voyages of experiment, in which, under the tuition of Wood or the Bartons, he became acquainted with the practical parts of navigation. The consequences of such conduct were highly favourable to him : he became as popular with his sailors as he was beloved by his nobility ; his fame was carried by them to foreign countries ; shipwrights, cannon-founders, and foreign artisans of every description, flocked to his court, from France, Italy, and the Low Countries.”* The Statute-book shows the anxiety evinced by the legislature in this reign for the encouragement of one great branch of maritime enterprise and industry. An act of 1493 directs that ships and busses should be built in all sea-ports for the fishery, none of which were to be under twenty tons burden ; that they should be provided with nets and other necessary implements ; and that the magistrates of the said towns should compel all idle persons to serve in them. Another act of 1499, entitled ‘Anent [concerning] the great innumerable riches that is tint [lost] in fault of ships and busses,’ renews the same regulations. Other enactments, however, prompted by the prevalent jealousy of foreigners, tended to check the extension of the fishing-trade fully as much as these did to force it. Thus, in 1540, the parliament altogether prohibited the sending of white fish beyond sea, declaring

* Tytler, Hist. Scot. v. 7.

that strangers should only be permitted to come and buy them of merchants and freemen of burghs with ready gold and silver, or merchandise ; and an act of the fourth parliament of James VI enjoined all fishers of herring, or other white fish, to bring their fish to free ports, there to be sold, first in common to all subjects, and afterwards the remainder to freemen, that the king's own subjects might be first served, and that, if abundance remained, they might be salted and exported by free burgesses. Here we have the spirit of the mercantile and that of the corporation system in operation at the same time—the exclusion of the foreign in favour of the native producer or capitalist, and of the non-freeman in favour of the burgess. The interest of the general class of consumers was as little thought of as if no such class had existed.

The Danish historians record that in 1510, when Denmark was invaded by a squadron from Lubeck, King John provided a fleet for himself by purchasing ships, at a great expense, from his allies, the English, French, and Scots, all of which nations, it is stated, had then many vessels in the Baltic. But the most considerable Scottish fleet of the earlier part of the sixteenth century of which we have an account is that which is stated to have been fitted out by James V., in 1540, for an expedition to the islands on the north-west coast of his kingdom. It consisted of twelve stout ships, with which the king himself, attended by several of his chief nobility and a military force (Lord Herbert says that the vessels, which he makes fifteen in number, carried two thousand men), landed in all the principal islands, and, carrying away with him the chiefs as hostages for the obedience and orderly behaviour of their clans, in that way, for the first time, reduced those dependencies under real subjection to the Scottish crown. On this occasion James carried with him an excellent navigator and hydrographer, named Alexander Lindsay, who drew from his observations in this voyage the first known chart of Scotland and the adjacent islands—a work that has been repeatedly engraved, and is not only very accurate for

that age, but much superior to some drawn at a later date.*

Veer, otherwise called Campvere, or Terveer, in Zealand, had now become the Scottish staple in the Netherlands, and Ludovico Guicciardini states that it owed its principal commerce to that circumstance. The principal foreign trade of Scotland, as of England, was, during the whole of this period, with the Netherlands. The office of Conservator of the nation's mercantile privileges in that country is mentioned in an act of parliament passed in one of the first years of the sixteenth century, and is thought to be of still earlier origin; an act of 1579 imposes a payment of 10*l.* Flemish (about 6*l.* sterling) as entrance-money upon every person becoming a member of the association of merchants trading to the Netherlands; and another act of the same year (repeated in 1597) confiscates all the goods of non-freemen trading thither, two-thirds to go to the crown, and the remaining third to the conservator. This office, which was similar to that of a foreign consul, was preserved, it may be added, down almost to our own times. In the latter years of the sixteenth century mention is made of Scottish ships trading both to the Azores and the Canaries. Wine was probably the principal commodity which they brought from those islands.

The commercial legislation of the northern kingdom continued to be of the same restrictive character as ever to the end of the present period. In 1579 the exportation of coals and of salted meat was strictly prohibited. In 1581 and 1582 certain sumptuary regulations were promulgated by the parliament for the avowed purpose of putting down or diminishing the use of foreign commodities, in the notion that thereby home manufactures would be encouraged and the poor better employed. All persons, not being dukes, earls, lords of parliament, knights, or landed gentlemen possessed of at least 2000*l.* of yearly rent (that is, 250*l.* sterling), were prohibited, under heavy fines, from wearing in their clothing or lin-

* Note by Macpherson, in Annals of Commerce, vol. ii. p. 86.

ing any cloth of gold or silver, velvet, satin, damask, taffeties, fringes, passments (a kind of lace), or embroidery of gold, silver, or silk ; or (with the exception of certain officers and magistrates) any lawn, cambric, or woollen cloth made in foreign parts ; and all persons under the above-mentioned degrees were also forbidden the use of confections, foreign drugs, and costly spices, which, it is affirmed, were wont to be lavishly used at weddings, christenings, and other banquets, by persons of low estate. At the same time the exportation of wool was absolutely prohibited. The admission of representatives of shires and burghs to seats in the Scottish parliament, which took place in 1587, was soon followed by the enactment of various laws for confining both trade and manufactures, as far as possible, to the freemen of burghs—with so quick an instinct did the new class that had thus obtained a share in the legislature proceed to turn the power they had secured to account in the promotion of their own interests or selfish views ! Towards the close of the present period, however, we begin to perceive symptoms of the relaxation or giving way of the old legislation against foreign commerce, as it may be correctly designated. In 1597 the parliament, while it renewed the prohibition against the exportation of wool, found itself obliged to allow the bringing over of craftsmen from foreign parts to work it up ; and, while it laid a duty of five per cent. upon all cloth and other merchandise imported from abroad, it permitted peers, barons, and freeholders both to send their own goods beyond sea without paying custom, and also to import wines, cloths, and other furniture, duty free, provided they did so, not for merchandise, but for their own particular use. This was a permission which we may be sure would be taken advantage of to introduce foreign commodities into the country to a much greater extent than the act professed to contemplate. Another of the acts of the parliament of this year, however, absolutely prohibited the importation into the country of English woollens, which, it was pleased to say, had, for the most part, only an outward show, and were wanting in that

substance and strength which oft-times they appeared to have, besides being one of the chief causes of the transportation of gold and silver out of the realm.

The legal interest of money in Scotland was fixed in 1586 at ten per cent., or at five bolls of victual for 100*l.* by the year. The average price of five bolls of victual, that is, probably, oats, was therefore 10*l.*, or about 25*s.* sterling. In other words, oats at this time sold in Scotland for about 5*s.* per boll, which would be about 6*s. 8d.* per quarter.

The history of the Coinage in England for the greater part of the present period exhibits a continuation of the process of depreciation which had been going on throughout the preceding century, with the introduction of a new mode of debasement still more ruinous.

Henry VII. preserved the same standard which had been fixed by Edward IV. in 1464 and adhered to by Richard III., the pound of silver being still coined into 450 pennies, or thirty-seven nominal shillings and six-pence. Shillings, which had hitherto been only money of account, were first struck by this king in 1504; they were at first called, also, large groats, and afterwards testoons, the latter name (from the French *teste* or *tête*, a head) being given to them from the royal image being stamped upon them in the unusual form of a profile instead of a full face. "This silver money of Henry VII. with the half face," says Leake, "differs therein from all his predecessors after King Stephen; and in this his successors followed his example, for we have none afterwards with the full face but the bad money of Henry VIII. and the good of Edward VI. He was the first, likewise, except Henry III., that added the number to his name to distinguish his money from the former Henries. He also left off the old Rose, as it is called, about the head, and, instead of the pellets and place of mintage on the reverse, he placed the arms, which is the first time we see it upon the English silver money."* A new gold coin appears in the reign of Henry VII.,

* Hist. Ac. of English Money, p. 177.

called the Sovereign, or sometimes the Rose Rial, or the Double Rose Noble, of the value of twenty shillings ; and there were also half sovereigns and double sovereigns. As these gold coins, however, are exceedingly scarce, the writer last quoted thinks it probable that “ they were struck upon extraordinary occasions, only in the nature of medals, and, perhaps, were first coined in honour of the king’s coronation, as his figure thereon, in the attitude of that solemnity, seems to intimate.” “ We are told,” he adds, “ such were distributed at the coronation of Queen Mary, and sovereigns were coined in every reign afterwards to King James I. inclusive.”

The state of Henry VIII.’s money, Leake observes, was, like his mind and humour, very changeable and uncertain. At first he observed the same standard as his father, but he afterwards debased both his gold and his silver coins, being, Camden says, the first king of England that mixed the money with brass, or rather copper. Some alloy, however, was of course used before his time ; and the fact seems to be that he merely made a very considerable increase in the quantity, employing the copper not merely to harden the coin and make it fit for use, but to diminish its intrinsic value. According to the tables drawn up by Folkes from the sure authority of the indentures made with the Masters of the Mint, it appears that, whereas, hitherto, the minted pound had consisted of eleven ounces two pennyweights of silver, and only eighteen pennyweights of alloy, Henry, in 1543, changed the proportions to ten ounces of silver and two ounces of alloy. Two years after he reduced the amount of silver to six ounces, or only one-half of the entire metal ; and in 1546 he adopted the still more monstrous proportion of only four ounces of silver with eight of alloy. The pieces struck in both these last-mentioned coinages can only be justly described by the name of base money. But in addition to this debasement of the coinage Henry very materially depreciated it ; that is to say, he coined the pound of silver or mixed metal into a greater nominal amount of money than it had previously been made to produce. Instead of

37*s.* 6*d.*, or 450 pennies, into which it had been coined ever since the fourth year of Edward IV., he made it yield 45*s.*, or 540 pennies, in 1527 ; and in 1543, 48*s.*, or 576 pennies. So that, taking the effect of the two operations together, he at last, instead of the former rate of 450 pennies out of eleven ounces and two pennyweights of silver, produced 576 pennies out of only four ounces of that metal. Henry's gold coins were sovereigns, half-sovereigns, or rials, half and quarter rials, angels, angelets or half angels, and quarter angels, George nobles, forty-penny pieces, crowns of the double rose, and half-crowns.* The George noble was so called from its having on the reverse St. George killing the dragon ; its value was 6*s.* 8*d.*, or two forty-penny pieces, the old value of the angel, which in 1527 was raised to 7*s.* 6*d.*, an alteration rendered necessary in order to maintain the old relation between the gold and silver coinage after the similar depreciation of the latter. Gold was at this time valued, in the operations of the English Mint, at twelve times its weight in silver.†

But the depreciation and the debasement of the coinage were carried still farther by Edward VI. than they

* Leake, p. 195.

† A groat and a half groat coined by Cardinal Wolsey, as Archbishop of York, are among the curiosities of the coinage of this reign. These pieces, on the sides of the shield containing the royal arms, displayed the letters T. W., for Thomas Wolsey, and underneath the cardinal's hat. "It was an article of the cardinal's impeachment," says Leake, "that he presumptuously imprinted the cardinal's hat under the king's arms upon his majesty's coins of groats made at York, which had never been done by any subject before. So that his crime was not for coining money with the cardinal's hat thereon—for the smaller coins, which bore the same stamp, are not taken notice of—but for coining groats, which had never been done by any subject before; but, as to small money, it had been immemorially coined in the bishop's mints at Canterbury, York, and Durham. But this power dwindled away with the pope's authority here, and was discontinued after this reign; Edward Lee, Wolsey's successor, being the last that used this privilege."

had been by his father. At first, indeed, he diminished the quantity of alloy from eight to six ounces in the pound ; but in 1551 he increased it to nine, leaving only three ounces of silver in the pound of mixed metal out of which the different pieces of money were struck. Then, instead of 48*s.*, as in the last reign, 72*s.* were now coined out of the pound. That is to say, instead of the old rate of 450 pennies out of more than eleven ounces of silver, three ounces were now made to yield 864 pennies. The public inconvenience and confusion, however, that resulted from this prodigious depreciation came at length to be so severely felt that, towards the end of the reign, vigorous measures were taken to restore the coinage to its ancient standard ; and in 1552 the alloy in the pound of silver was reduced to nineteen pennyweights, or to within one pennyweight of what it had always been down to the thirty-fourth year of Henry VIII. At the same time the number of shillings into which the pound of metal was coined was reduced from 72 to 60. The gold coin, which had been as much depreciated as the silver, was likewise restored to the same extent. Edward VI. was the first English king that issued crowns, half-crowns, and sixpences of silver, if we except a crown struck by his father, which does not seem to have been intended for circulation.

One of Queen Mary's first proceedings was to issue a proclamation for the regulation of the coinage, in which she dilated upon the great mischiefs that had ensued from the base money of the two preceding reigns ; but in her own first coinage, nevertheless, she once more slightly reduced the fineness of the metal, making the alloy of the pound of silver an ounce instead of nineteen pennyweights, and adding also two pennyweights more of alloy to the pound of gold. The coins struck after her marriage bear her husband's head and name as well as her own. Some authorities state that crowns of gold were struck by Philip and Mary ; but no such pieces are now known to exist.

The complete restoration of the coinage was reserved for Queen Elizabeth. In the second year of her reign

the silver coin recovered the whole of its ancient fineness by the alloy in the pound being reduced to eighteen pennyweights, a proportion which has ever since been retained. The number of shillings struck out of the pound of silver, however, was not lessened ; on the contrary, after having continued to be 60, as in the preceding reign, till 1601, it was then increased to 62, as it remained ever after till 1816, when it was farther increased to 66, which it still is. The debased money of her father and brother was also recalled and melted in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign ; so much of it as was received at the Mint is computed to have passed current for above 638,000*l.*, its real value being only about 244,000*l.* The gold coins of Elizabeth are sovereigns and half sovereigns, crowns and half crowns, angels, half angels, and quarter angels, nobles and double nobles. Of the sovereigns there are some remarkable as having milled edges, being the first English money so distinguished. There are also milled shillings, sixpences, and other silver coins belonging to almost every year of this reign. Besides the common silver money, Elizabeth coined what were called portcullis crowns or dollars, being imitations of the Spanish dollar or piece of eight, and of the value of 4*s.* 6*d.*, for the use of the East India Company. These pieces are now very scarce. It appears also that, a short time before her death, she had intended to coin farthings and other coins of small value of copper, a metal which had not yet been made use of for money in this country.

The depreciation of the Scottish money, which had already proceeded so far before the commencement of the present period, was carried during its course farther and farther in each successive reign. The debasement of the metal of the Scottish coinage, however, never approached the point to which that of the English was carried by Henry VIII. and Edward VI. As in England, the ancient standard of fineness had been eighteen pennyweights of alloy in the pound of silver ; in 1529, the sixteenth year of James V., the proportion of alloy was for the first time increased to one ounce ; in 1571 it was

made three ounces, and in 1576 four ounces ; but three years later it was restored to the former proportion of one ounce, at which it remained throughout the rest of the period. But, whereas the pound of silver had originally, as in England, been coined into 20 shillings, or rather into 240 pennies, and even after a century of progressive depreciation had in 1475 been made to produce only 14*s.* ; in 1529 it was coined into 192*s.* ; in 1556 into 260*s.* ; in 1565 into 360*s.* ; in 1571 into 334*s.* ; in 1579 into 440*s.* ; in 1581 into 480*s.* ; in 1597 into 600*s.* ; and finally, in 1601, into 720*s.* In other words, what was originally only one pound had, by the steady operation of this nefarious and mischievous process, as practised by the government through the space of about three centuries, been made at last to pass current for no less than thirty-six pounds !

END OF VOL. I.

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